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'Why can Love neither be bought nor sold? | 'All other goods by Fortune's hand are given;
Because its only price is *Love*. | A Wife is the peculiar gift of Heaven.'—POPE.

'What constitutes National Prosperity? Not wealth or commerce simply, or military achievements, but the greatest possible number of **HEALTHY, HAPPY, and GRACEFUL HOMES**, where the purest flame burns brightest on the altar of family love, and woman, with her piety, forbearance, and kindness of love, is permitted to officiate as high priestess.'

RICHES, TITLES, HONOUR, POWER, AND WORLDLY PROSPECTS ARE AS NOUGHT TO A DEEPLY-ROOTED LOVE!

'In every being throughout animated Nature, from the most insignificant insect to the most enlightened, ennobled, and highly-developed being, we notice a deeply-rooted love for one possession before all others, and that is the possession of Life. What will not man give to preserve his life? The value of riches, titles, honour, power, and worldly prospects are as nought compared with the value which the same man, however humble, and even miserable, places on the preservation of his life.'



A SONG OF GRATITUDE.

By the late S. C. HALL, F.S.A., who was over eighty years of age when he wrote the following:—

These words a wise Physician said:—
'STOMACH's a master all should dread,
Oppose his laws—for Death prepare!
Obey them—Health will triumph there!
With grateful thanks I hail thy name,
ENO!—and strive to give it fame.
Your SALT OF FRUIT can bring me ease,
And give me comfort when I please;
By true aperient, strong or mild:
To calm a man, or soothe a child;
Aid Nature without force or strain;
Strengthen heart, liver, lung, and brain;
Make the pulse neither fast nor slow,
The blood-heat not too high nor low,
So bringing health at little cost,
Restoring what neglect had lost!
To ENO's SALT I owe a debt
The grateful mind may not forget;
With rhyme that debt in part I pay,
Experience teaches what to say.

What nobler aim can man attain, than conquest over human pain?

For Health and Longevity, use ENO'S 'FRUIT SALT.'

SUGAR, CHEMICALLY-COLOURED SHERBET, STIMULANTS.—

Experience shows that Sugar, Chemically-Coloured Sherbet, Mild Ales, Port Wine, Dark Sherries, Sweet Champagne, Liqueurs, and Brandy, are all very apt to disagree, while Light Wines, and Gin or old Whisky largely diluted with Soda Water, will be found the least objectionable. ENO'S 'FRUIT SALT' is particularly adapted for any constitutional weakness of the liver. It possesses the power of reparation where digestion has been disturbed or lost, and places the invalid on the right track to health. ENO'S 'FRUIT SALT' should be kept in every bedroom and travelling trunk for any emergency; always useful, can never do any harm.

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No Man is bound to be Rich, Great, or Wise, but every Man is bound to be Honest.

THE SECRET OF SUCCESS.—Sterling Honesty of Purpose; without it, Life is a Sham!—A new invention is brought before the public, and commands success. A score of abominable imitations are immediately introduced by the unscrupulous, who, in copying the original closely enough to deceive the public, and yet not so exactly as to infringe upon legal rights, exercise an ingenuity that, employed in an original channel, could not fail to secure reputation and profit.—ADAMS.

CAUTION.—Examine each Bottle, and see that the Capsule is marked ENO'S 'FRUIT SALT.' Without it, you have been imposed upon by a worthless imitation.

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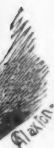
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LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

FEBRUARY 1890.

Virginie.

A TALE OF ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

By VAL PRINSEP, ASSOCIATE OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY.

CHAPTER VII.

FIRST AWAKENING OF LOVE.

COMTE ETIENNE DE LA BEAUCE was a man to be remembered. Left early an orphan by the untimely death of both parents, he had been brought up by an uncle living in Paris. No pains had been spared with his education. Sleek abbés had initiated him into the mysteries of the classics, softening the difficulties as much as possible. Then he had a professor of mathematics and the military art, a young man who had written prize essays and shown much talent in the science of fortification, a certain Lazare Carnot. So that, at the age of seventeen, when he received a commission in the 'Corps de Garde du Roi,' there was no more elegant or better-educated young man about the Court. But the young La Beauce was never happy or satisfied with a Court life. He early learnt to think for himself. He had drunk deeply at those philosophical fountains whose bubbling waters had inebriated so many young Frenchmen of the day. The scepticism then prevalent among the polite had, however, but slightly affected him, while the writings of Jean Jacques had but strengthened his natural love of duty and sense of responsibility. Without being a prig, his life at Court with its idle trivialities, the Court

itself with its empty pomps and ceremonies, quickly palled on him. He sought active employment and got transferred to the French army serving in America.

There he acquired a manly independence that ill suited the French Court; so, soon after the return of the expedition, he retired to his vast property in the neighbourhood of Chartres, firmly convinced that he would be doing his duty better to his country in ameliorating the lot of those dependent on him than by joining in politics or seeking the preferment within the reach of his rank at Versailles.

The family of the Comte was one of the oldest in France. His line of ancestors ran back to times of fable, and it was currently believed in the country that the Château la Beauce, from which they took their title, had given its name to the district, and had existed when the town of Chartres was an unreclaimed waste. It was historical that a sieur de Fonville had accompanied St. Louis on his crusade, and that he and his descendants had owned the Château of La Beauce ever since. For many generations the Comtes de la Beauce had principally resided at this château, preferring the quiet of the country life to the smiles of royalty or the intrigues of Court. They had contented themselves with their title and the respect of their dependents. Yet a Comte de la Beauce had fought with Henry IV. at Ivry, and another had suffered a long imprisonment during the ministry of the Cardinal Richelieu. A younger branch of the family had advanced in rank under Louis XIV. and had gained a Marquisate under his great-grandson. Their château, from which they took the title of Boissec, was about five miles as the crow flies from the Château of Beauce.

The Comte's liberal views had caused a coolness between him and his neighbour and cousin the Marquis de Boissec, who was a type of a grand seigneur of the feudal times, and, in proportion as the Comte was respected and loved, so was his cousin hated and feared. Nor were the smaller gentry of the neighbourhood at all more tolerant of the Comte's liberalism. If they were poor, at least they could afford to be proud. To them a great noble who devoted himself to the amelioration of the lot of his tenants was unworthy of the caste. They sneered at his improvements. If they had dared, they would have rebelled against his authority in the provincial council of nobles, of which by right of his ancient title he was 'doyen.' But amongst the people the Comte was so deservedly popular that, although his brother nobles refused to

send him to Paris to their 'States-Général,' the 'Tiers Etat' resolved he should be their representative. This honour the Comte respectfully declined, saying he should be unwilling to oppose his friends, and that the people could be better served by M. Pétion, a clever advocate of Chartres, who knew their wants better than he did.

In person the Comte de la Beauce was strikingly handsome. The reserve which was habitual with him gave his conversation a sort of stateliness, which was caused by no want of heart, but rather from a diffidence which arose from his unwillingness to assert himself, when his abilities would have really enabled him to take a leading part in any society. By those that understood him, by his tenants and dependents, he was much loved; they knew behind his society veneer, beneath his seeming coldness, there beat as warm a heart as would be found in France.

The little party that afternoon chatted on familiarly. Célimène's youthful admiration for her friend naturally caused her to wish she should make a favourable impression on her cousin. She would not rest content till she had made Virginie sing several songs, and she watched with a feeling of mischievous delight the effect produced by the music on the Comte. In truth Virginie's rich contralto had a wonderful pathos in its tone which seemed to gather force as she sung, harmonising with the long low beams of the sun as they reddened towards twilight. La Beauce was entranced. An eager desire took possession of him to lead this sweet creature to his country home, to share with her his hitherto solitary house, to be loved by her even as he felt he could love her. Who was she? Did Célimène know? Le Blanc! An un-aristocratic name. What did it matter?

Soon Madame de la Rosière declared it was too late for her to be out, and rose to retire to the house. Virginie, with the kind solicitude of a good heart, offered her an arm, and, carrying innumerable wraps, helped the good lady to her room. La Beauce seized the opportunity of detaining Célimène and instantly overwhelmed her with questions. Who was she? Where did she come from? Where her father lived? Had she a father? But Célimène laughed in his face.

'Why, cousin Étienne,' she cried, 'you look so serious; are you ill? Virginie is a friend whom I met at the convent. Yes, she has a father, I believe. She is staying here a day or two. She is an angel. Come, Petite Mere will want us.' And away she tripped to the house.

La Beauce followed. He made up his mind he should not go back home, but stay in Chartres to be near his aunt, who was evidently far from well.

So it happened that, whether Virginie was staying at the Hermitage (so was the De la Rosière's house called), or whether she only went there for the afternoon, La Beauce was always there, or joined them shortly after her arrival. He made expeditions to the environs. He took them on to the river when at twilight Virginie's voice, echoing over the golden water, was a thing to hear. How delightful those days seemed to him! To watch her slender form moving through sun and shade, to sit gazing into those soft, calm eyes, to listen to that glorious voice was to him unutterable joy. Célimène, though naturally a tease (and every pretty girl delights in laughing at a cousin, especially when he is in love), Célimène herself was inwardly pleased. It must be owned that she gave prompt notice to La Beauce of Virginie's coming. She seemed to triumph in her friend's success. So greatly did she admire her, that the admiration of her cousin seemed to her most natural. To be jealous never entered into her head. La Beauce, though he had never had speech with Virginie alone, though hardly had his hand touched hers, was deeply, irretrievably in love. Did she love him? He dared not ascertain. Why run the risk of destroying the sweet dream so long as its dreamlike nature satisfied him? What if by speaking he should break the spell and the vision vanish? Besides, in France it was more becoming to arrange these things through the father, and to address a demand to the young lady herself might be taken as a want of courtesy. And yet he was determined to make this fair creature his wife.

So time after time he came, and gazed his fill, and each day went home deeper and deeper in love, and summer passed away. Yet he said no word.

And how was it with Virginie?

She, too, had her dream. Innocent as she was, she saw the comte admired her, and her heart went out to him with a simple love such as a saint might own to. She thought it no wrong thing for her to bask in this sunshine of affection. She had no qualm about leading this man to love her. He was a man of the world, a man ten years older than she, a great noble, while she was Virginie le Blanc, daughter of the innkeeper at Sèvres. She never thought love possible between them, since love to her was marriage. And so love took her unawares. If she ever examined

her heart, if she ever had been told she was in love, she would have been astonished. Was this love? Alas! poor Virginie, what else?

At length he determined to know his fate. It was already autumn, and the leaves were mostly off the trees; but the sun shone brightly, making precious stones of such as autumn havoc had left, and the crisp earthy smell was pleasant enough, though it told of winter. They were walking in the old garden; Célimène had rushed indoors to her mother, who had sent to call her, leaving the two to follow with more sedate steps. La Beauce, turning up the avenue, said:—

‘Mademoiselle Virginie, may we not take one turn more?’

There was nothing in what he said. How could she refuse? Yet the words struck a chill through the girl’s heart. Was it a presentiment that he was about to say something to shatter her bright dream? What if he declared his love? What if he asked her to be his wife? How avow herself unworthy of him? How tell him she was the daughter of an innkeeper who had been a cook? If such things did occur to her, she quickly put them on one side. It was a dream. It was impossible for this proud aristocrat to forget his many quarterings. Besides, he would not ask her. It was not to be thought of.

So they paced up the lime-tree avenue in silence, each inwardly afraid of what the other might say. At length La Beauce broke the silence: ‘Mademoiselle,’ he began, looking straight in front of him, ‘I have an avowal to make. Had I the honour of knowing the father of mademoiselle, I would have addressed myself to him first, and he would have perhaps pleaded with his daughter; and yet I have a dread of addressing him.’ He paused and swished a dead leaf from the path as if he were removing a scruple. ‘In America, where I have served, the custom is for the two people most concerned to settle matters between them. It is an English custom I would with your leave follow. These last weeks have taught me how much I value the pleasure of seeing you.’ He stood still now, and, looking straight into her face, took her hand. He was visibly agitated, his hand trembling, while hers lay cold and still within his grasp.

‘What am I to say?’ he cried passionately. ‘Virginie, I love you! Ah! do not speak. Do not turn away. Let me at least have my say. Virginie, I cannot live without you. I know not who you are. What matter? I care not, only say you love me. Turn your eyes this way, that I may read my answer there,

No? Then speak to me; say you love me, Virginie, my own.' And in the ardour of his declaration he seized her by the waist and drew her to him. But at that moment a silvery laugh made them both start, and Célimène appeared. La Beauce was furious. As for Virginie, she would have fled—anywhere—to escape her answer. She was, for a moment, thankful to Célimène for having interrupted. But he held her firmly by the hand, fuming the while, and darting indignant glances at his laughing cousin. She at last, partly checking her laughter, spoke:

'Really, Étienne, you ought to have taken me into your confidence. Oh, do not look so savage! You do not surprise me; but it's all your fault, and I am just as vexed as you are. I was laughing just now, I could cry this minute. There, don't say a word; I shall keep discreetly at the other end of the garden till one of you thinks fit to tell me all about it.' And away she bounded, and was lost to their view.

There was a most awkward pause. It is not easy to take up a passionate speech when once it is broken. While La Beauce was angry with himself to think how difficult it was now to find words to express his feelings, when a moment before he could hardly restrain his utterance, Virginie felt a chill come upon her. In the ardour of his first declaration he had taken her in his arms. If she had had to answer then, she would have answered 'yes' in spite of everything. A strange feeling had come over her. She hardly knew what she was about. She felt, for the first time, she loved this man, that he was worthy of her love, and that he returned it. What more was needed for their happiness?

But Célimène's interruption gave her time to recover herself before the fatal word had been said. What! give this man a wife for whom he might blush before his haughty friends? Never! So she looked straight into his eyes, gazing fearlessly, though her voice faltered as she said:

'Monsieur, you have done me an honour which I do not deserve. Meeting me here under your aunt's roof, the chosen friend of your cousin, you imagined you were addressing one whom you could make your wife. You did not know that you were offering your hand to a nameless girl. She honours you for your generosity. She—why should I deny it?—she loves you——' Here La Beauce would have seized her once more in his arms, but she gently disengaged herself. 'Loves you,' she continued, 'too much to permit the sacrifice your generosity or the blindness of your love prompts you to make. No! listen to me,'

for he would have interrupted her; 'I know I am acting for your good, possibly for mine, too. My father is a simple, honest *bourgeois*, one for whom I do not blush; but you, Comte de la Beauce, what would you think of your father-in-law, the cook?'

'Virginie,' cried La Beauce, 'your confession does you honour. I protest I love you the better for it. What matters it what your father is? Why should it interfere in our happiness? Let us think only of ourselves.'

'I think but of you,' said Virginie sadly. 'What other answer can I give? What other answer is possible from an honest woman?'

'Virginie,' pleaded he, 'let me go to your father and formally ask his consent.'

'No! no!' cried Virginie.

'Is this alliance that I propose so much to be despised that he would reject my offer?'

'Alas! why will you force me again to repeat that the barrier of rank divides us?'

'But what care I for rank or birth? Have I not seen the possessors of both? What can they offer but a love which I would not compare to yours for purity? Virginie, pity me.'

But Virginie again put his proffered caress aside. 'Monsieur,' she said, 'let us end this interview; in mentioning my father you recall to me that I have a duty towards him. My father has supported and educated me these ten years, denying his great love the society of his only child that she might become a worthy and good woman. He now claims me, this loving father; can I refuse his claim? Can I deny him the pleasure he has panted for all these years? Let me pass, monsieur; let us wake from this dream that has been so sweet, at least for me. Or let it remain still a dream.'

'Go, then, to your father; remain with him as long as you think fit; I will wait for you if you give me hope.'

'It must not be. It must not be,' cried Virginie piteously.

'Why do you say so? Is it my rank you object to? Let me drop it.'

'No, it is impossible.'

'Ah, Virginie,' said La Beauce almost bitterly, 'you sacrifice the happiness of a life to an absurd scruple. If I care not for rank, surely you can forgive me my ancestors. Do not be so cruel.' Tears stood in his eyes as he spoke.

Virginie faltered in her determination. Here before her

eyes, offering her a life of happiness, was the man she felt she loved, to whom she was causing infinite pain in refusing what she most longed for. Hers was not a weak nature. She could suffer anything for one she loved, she would have gloried in such suffering; but to inflict torture on one for whom she willingly tortured herself, was more than she could bear. 'Ah, monsieur,' she cried, wringing her hands in her distress, 'spare me too. Think you it is not pain to me to do this? For every reason it is better so.'

'But,' urged he, 'let me have hope—hope that in the end I may succeed.'

He looked so piteous as he spoke that her heart bled for him. What right had she to refuse to let him have some hope?

With the gesture of a queen she gave him both her hands, saying, 'Be content to know I love you.'

They were warm enough now, those hands so cold a moment before, and La Beauce raised them to his lips and kissed them again and again.

Virginie with difficulty withdrew them, faltering, 'Ah! do not be so cruel,' and she stepped back; 'we must part.'

'But,' cried La Beauce, 'when am I to see you again?'

She turned and fled; then, staying one moment to look at him, cried, 'Who knows? Oh, Heaven pity me!' she ran quickly from him.

La Beauce stamped his foot with impatience. What was he to do? He was more wildly in love than ever. And yet he had been refused. Refused by a Mademoiselle le Blanc! His sensitive nature was deeply hurt. He felt the hot rebellious blood coursing through his veins. Was he, the Comte de la Beauce, the owner of vast property, the inheritor of proud titles and privileges, to be thwarted? And by whom? By a girl on whom he wished to confer a great honour. But he put away such thoughts. He recognised the nobleness of this girl's refusal. She was mistaken in her ideas. She was wrong in thinking as she did. He would yet convince her of his sincerity, and overcome her scruples. Where could he find such another? So pondering, with his head bent to the ground, he passed out through the garden door, to escape the questioning of his too inquisitive cousin, perhaps the expostulations of his aunt, whose old-world prejudices might lead her to agree in Virginie's decision. So he tramped on through the leafy lane, vexed at the check he had received, but all the more determined to gain his object, rendered doubly dear by the very difficulty he found in its attainment.

CHAPTER VIII.

SELF-SACRIFICE.

VIRGINIE meanwhile fled through the garden in a half-hysterie state. She was unconscious what she did, so greatly had the effort she had made exhausted her strength. Her dream was gone, utterly dissipated by her own deed, when it might have been so easily realised. For she had become aware that she really loved him, that it was love after all, love with which she had trifled. Now she felt giving him up, and so ending her dream, would break her heart. On she tottered, she knew not where, till she found herself in the arms of Célimène. That laughing damsel was serious now. She was, though a child in years, quite able to judge for herself, her mother's invalid state having given an early development to her mind, and she saw and appreciated the state in which she found her friend, and tried all her resources to calm her agitation. But Virginie would not speak. Then she tried artfully to draw out a confession by blaming her cousin. 'It is too bad of Étienne,' she cried; 'poor dear Virginie, has he insulted you?'

'No, no,' sobbed Virginie.

'No, he would not dare to do so in this house. What, then could have happened?'

Still no answer. Then she kissed her and petted her, as though she were a child, and gradually Virginie grew calmer.

'Leave me, dear Célimène,' she said, drying her tears. 'Leave me alone to recover myself. I must write a letter at once.' She started up as she spoke. 'Have no fear for me. I am quite recovered. Believe me,'—here she kissed her friend—'it is nothing to alarm you—nothing you need tell your mother. Have confidence in me, and let me alone.'

With reluctance Célimène left her in her own boudoir. She could not understand a nature like Virginie's. She herself would have rushed into her friend's arms and told everything. A shallow nature, perhaps, feeling acutely for the moment, her confidences rippled over like the streamlet till they were lost amid many waters. Virginie's heart was like a deep, deep reservoir, where all was kept safe and bound in by walls. Alas! if the wall were to break. The least little rift would be dangerous.

It was not broken yet, this wall—nay, it was even strengthened by the present strain. Virginie at once set to work. Her mind

was quite made up. She would not see La Beauce again. She would go back to her father and forget her love—if possible. So she wrote two letters. One was quickly written; it was to her father, which duly arrived as we have recorded. But her letter to La Beauce was a much more difficult matter; time after time she began, only to destroy her work, nor until the impatient Célimène had looked in several times was her letter finished. It was as follows:

‘Monsieur le Comte.—At our parting, overcome by your entreating, I was weak enough to have given you hope that I would consent to be your wife. I was moved by the pain my previous refusal had caused you. Alas! on calmer reflection, I cannot but come to the conclusion that my first decision was the right one, and to that I must now hold. Ah, monsieur, do not torture me by seeking another interview. Do you think I do not love you? If I did not, can you conceive my refusing the position you offer me? What girl in my rank of life ever had a greater honour conferred upon her? But you, Comte de la Beauce, descendant of the sieurs de Fonville, who fought with St. Louis, and of a long line of noble and illustrious ancestors, what would these ancestors think of such a *mésalliance*? Believe me, my pride is as great in its way as theirs. Should I accept your offer to become the Comtesse de la Beauce, how could I bear the sneers of my sister comtesses? How would your pride stand a slight on your wife? To me it would be death to feel that I brought disgrace on the man I loved. Ah, monsieur, such divisions of class were ordained for the best. Let us bow before them. Let us forget, or, if we remember, let us think that these things might have been had we been weak. Believe me, your poor Virginie feels the pain she causes acutely, but she is strong in her sense of right. Forgive her, then, and let her be as in a dream, but only a dream.—Your ever loving

‘VIRGINIE.

‘*Postscriptum*.—I go shortly to my father. You will not know where we live. It is far from here. When with him I shall never forget the honour you have done me, but also, I am certain, never repent the sacrifice I have made.’

Célimène, peeping in once more at the door, found Virginie with this letter closed in her hand. She rushed to her and threw her arms around her. Virginie was calm now that she had done the deed, and felt it her duty to confide to a certain extent

in her friend. She desired she should give this letter to La Beauce. She could trust it to no other.

'You asked just now what your cousin had said to me,' she said, stroking Célimène's fair hair. 'He was generous enough to ask me to be his wife.'

'You are going to marry Étienne!' cried Célimène, clapping her hands with childish delight.

'I never said so,' said Virginie calmly. 'No, my dear, I felt it my duty to refuse him.'

'Refuse Étienne!' and Célimène's eyes opened very wide. 'What! you, Virginie le Blanc, refuse my cousin, the Comte de la Beauce!'

'It is because he is the Comte de la Beauce, and I simply Virginie le Blanc, that I have refused him. Ask me no questions, dear Célimène. Perhaps I had no right to come here. I am but a poor *bourgeoise*, and ought not to have intruded into such high society. I ask your pardon; I shall not come again.'

Célimène gazed at her friend with astonishment. 'What do you mean, Virginie?' she cried.

'Just this. A poor plebeian, from friendship for a highborn damsel, accepted her invitation to visit her, and was treated by her as an equal. In her house she met the highborn damsel's cousin, who was foolish enough to fall in love with her. Perhaps in his ignorance he thought this girl his equal. In his generosity——'

'Or in his love,' interrupted Célimène, taking Virginie's hand.

'No matter which,' continued Virginie, 'love may blind him for a time, but the lowborn damsel dreads his recovery from his infatuation, and the consequences of the *mésalliance*, and so has written to reiterate her refusal. That is my little story,' said Virginie with tears in her eyes. 'It is for you, my dear Célimène, to pardon me, and add one more to the many kindnesses you have shown me by giving this letter to your cousin.'

Célimène took the letter in her dimply hands, with the pouting uncertainty of a child who does not know whether to laugh or cry. She could not understand Virginie's generosity. She did not know what to say to her. Could this really be her reason for refusing an offer so much above her expectations? So she stood, the picture of indecision, while Virginie was putting on her hat and cloak to return to the convent. At length, with an impetuous movement, she threw her arms around her friend.

'Virginie,' she sobbed, 'you will not leave me in this way?'

What am I to say to Etienne and to my mother? What am I to do without you? I shall be miserable indeed!

There was a mixture of childish consternation and thought of self in her words. She was very fond of her friend, whose society had been very pleasant to her, an only child. Virginie put back the clustering curls from the fair girl's forehead and kissed her.

'I must not come here again,' she said calmly, at which Célimène sobbed afresh like a spoilt child as she was. 'Dear Célimène, I shall see you at the convent, and I shall ever love you for your goodness to me; but, my dear, I must not meet him again. I shall never leave the walls of the convent till my father comes to fetch me away. Tell him so when you give him my letter. Your dear mother need know nothing of our secret. You can invent some excuse for my not coming here. You can tell her, which will indeed be the truth, that during the short time I have to remain in Chartres I intend to devote myself entirely to my studies.'

'Virginie,' cried the girl, 'how hard and unfeeling you are!'

Poor Virginie could stand it no longer; she burst into a flood of tears and threw her arms around her friend's neck. Was she not his cousin? Kissing her passionately, she suddenly tore herself away and rushed from the house.

Célimène faithfully discharged her errand. She gave the letter to La Beauce the very next day, when he arrived half-expecting to find Virginie. On reading it his agitation was very great. He questioned his cousin closely as to what Virginie had said, what she had done—in fact, put a number of incoherent questions to which she could give but very unsatisfactory answers. Finally he made her promise to take a letter to the convent. He wrote a long one, such as all lovers write, which Célimène duly delivered to Virginie at the convent. But that young lady refused to receive it. 'Tell him,' she said, 'I still hold to my determination, but tell him also that my sentiment remains, and will always remain, the same.'

It was a sad consolation to La Beauce to conclude from this answer that Virginie still loved him. He was a constant visitor at his aunt's, where he could talk incessantly with Célimène about Virginie—a theme on which that young lady also delighted to expatiate. He frequented the convent church and tried in vain to distinguish her form among the figures of the pupils behind the grille. Perhaps Virginie saw him and herself took precautions

not to be seen. But, though he strained his eyes, no Virginie did he see. He often heard her rich contralto voice in the chaunts of the service. Alas! it was maddening to him to think he was so close and yet that it was impossible to get any nearer! Sometimes he was angry with the girl. 'Surely,' he thought bitterly, 'if I can waive this distinction of rank, she ought to be able to do so too.' But in his heart he felt the generosity of her conduct, and he loved her none the less for her high-minded, and even chivalrous, decision.

Then he tried how the distractions of occupation would serve to make him forget. He returned home. He hunted, he shot, he occupied himself with business. All these things, which had sufficed to occupy his time before he knew her, now only caused his thoughts to wander towards his love. He frequently returned to Chartres under pretence of seeing his aunt, whose ailments increased as winter set in. He revisited the places he had seen with Virginie. Under this tree he remembered to have first set eyes on her. There in the avenue he had bid her take him. Alas! the leaves were all gone in the avenue, and the mighty cedar was bent with snow, which lay thick on the grass that had been pressed by her slim feet. Had the snow not been there this romantic lover was capable of kissing the turf she had trod on. He was ashamed of his weakness, but somehow it would have been a comfort to him to yield to it. Of what are not lovers capable? The crumpled ribbon found in after-years, faded and tossed away in some long-forgotten corner—what comfort it was at the time! The dry and withered rosebud that once had lent its sweetness to her, who has not such mementoes of the past? Who has not grovelled before these trifles that formed part of the decoration of the idols of our youth? Even Célimène, though her patience was sometimes sorely tried, was troubled at the pitiable state of her cousin. But Virginie was obdurate. However much her friend talked of La Beauce, she answered nothing, only—shall we confess it?—she did nothing to stop her talking; and, though she turned away, she greedily drank in all the young girl said, and it was inexpressibly consoling to her to know that the love of this man was genuine and true, for she herself deeply, madly loved in return.

So passed the winter and early spring. And when, as we have told, the March buds were bursting and the March flowers spotting copse and meadow, came Jacques one day and took Virginie home,

CHAPTER IX.

AT SÈVRES.

THE Comte de la Beauce rode to Versailles with a light heart. He had discovered the abode of his love! Why should she refuse him? Jacques le Blanc was an honest man, and did not seem devoid of reason. He would present himself and ask the daughter's hand in due form. As for Virginie, she appeared to him more beautiful than ever. She had a sad look in her eyes that La Beauce, modest man though he was, could not help attributing to love. Such a wife could disgrace no one. What, after all, was rank and wealth? He cared nothing for such distinctions of class. In theory, ever since he had been in America, he was a Republican. Not that he was insensible to the advantages of having ancestors of whom he could be proud. What man is, unless he is also disposed to do something to bring disgrace on his ancestry? If Virginie had been a beautiful *paysanne*, ignorant and unrepresentable, with nothing to recommend her but her good looks natural to youth, La Beauce might have hesitated. But Virginie was fit to be a queen, so far as looks and refinement went. And La Beauce, as he thought this, spurred on his horse and laughed with delight. He was determined to win her! So, laughing, he cantered past a long, grave-looking figure mounted on a sorry nag, who saluted him with a military air. It was the Capitaine Pinard. Conscious of having rather ruffled this gentleman's feelings, and being at the moment pleased with the world in general, the Comte de la Beauce reined up his horse, determined to smooth down his resentment. Pinard on his side urged forward his beast.

'My good Capitaine,' said La Beauce, 'I fear my apologies to you were not so ample as I could have wished.'

'Monsieur le Comte,' said Pinard, 'the field of battle is not a place for much etiquette. Monsieur was right to interrupt the little game in which we foolishly took a hand, and in truth he has my thanks. It was the love of adventure that made me to engage in the cause of the youth whom, I hear, is your excellency's cousin.'

'True enough,' said La Beauce, 'and as giddy-pated a young man as is to be found in Versailles, or, indeed, in France.'

'Exuberance of spirits is natural to youth. I have always encouraged it in those who can afford it,' said Pinard. 'Alas!

neither my age nor my fortune entitle me to indulge in such follies, and aiding that young spark will, I fear, deprive me of an employment that promised to be lucrative.'

Here the Capitaine Pinard gave a curious leer from his one eye.

'Am I to understand that you, my brave friend, were at the Couronne d'Or on business?'

'A man of my standing can ill afford to be idle,' said Pinard. La Beauce looked doubtingly at this ugly brave—was it possible he was watching Virginie?

'Come,' said he with forced jocularity. 'I should regret, indeed, if, through my cousin, so worthy a man should have lost a means of gaining an honest livelihood.'

Pinard glanced at him through his wicked eye.

'Monsieur le Comte,' he said, 'whether my work was honest or not, it is for me to judge. There are many things a gentleman may undertake, which on the face of them may seem somewhat suspicious. But the true cavalier cares not what others think, provided he satisfies his own conscience.'

'Which, no doubt, my good friend, is elastic on morality,' said La Beauce, drawing his bow at a venture.

'Man, hedged in by restraints such as the scruples of honour, still longs for the freedom of the primeval animal. So, when his eye discovers some siren, whose charm captivates his senses, his heart longs, but his honour restrains. What then happens? He goes to one whose feelings are no doubt equally regulated by honour, but whose conscience is, perhaps from an excess of reasoning power, more adaptable, more elastic. He says, "Pinard, my soul longs, my heart flutters, but my pride (another name for honour) does not permit." Then say I, "Pinard has no pride; Pinard will obtain information, and will strive to calm your fluttering heart by gratification." Then says monseigneur, grasping my hand, "My friend," and in my hand I find a gratification.'

'And pray who was the lady?' asked La Beauce eagerly.

'I said nothing of any lady,' said the other, looking straight in front of him.

'But you mentioned a gratification, my friend.'

'Undoubtedly.'

La Beauce drew forth a purse, which he shook in his hand.

'It is a pleasant sound,' said he carelessly.

Pinard's one eye twinkled.

'Monseigneur has a correct car. What is it monseigneur would wish to ascertain? Pinard is ever anxious to help his friends.'

'I wish to know,' said La Beauce, 'what the worthy Capitaine Pinard was doing at the Couronne d'Or. I have no wish to be too inquisitive; I care not to learn the name of the grand seigneur. But the business of friend Pinard interests me.'

'As a friend,' said Pinard, holding out his hand, 'give me your hand. I am touched by the interest you show.'

The two hands met; after the grasp of friendship, Pinard quickly slipped his into his pocket.

'Monseigneur,' he said, 'a certain Duc passing through Sèvres saw a lovely creature at a certain window.'

'Be more explicit, friend Pinard.'

'The window was at the Couronne d'Or, and the lady was the daughter of Maître le Blanc.'

La Beauce had much ado to keep his countenance.

'Well?' he said.

'Pinard,' said the other, 'kindly undertook to ascertain whether the said lady was accessible, and whether it would be possible to persuade her to change the solitude of the Couronne d'Or for the gaiety and brightness of the capital.'

'And what has the admirable Pinard discovered?'

'Nothing,' said the one-eyed laconically.

'Monsieur Pinard,' said La Beauce gravely, 'had better not return to the Couronne d'Or. This young lady may have friends, and, after the scene performed just now, Monsieur Pinard may find his position awkward.'

Pinard looked at La Beauce with a droll expression. 'Monseigneur the Duc may desire the further services of his friend,' he said, 'in which case what would be the duty of a real friend? Should he shun the danger? It would be unworthy of a soldier.'

'Nevertheless,' said La Beauce, 'I would have Capitaine Pinard be cautious.' And with that he spurred on his horse, leaving the one-eyed warrior with a look of astonishment on his battered visage.

La Beauce was much disturbed at the communication he had extracted from the worthy Capitaine. He saw the danger this girl ran at the Couronne d'Or, on the very highway traversed by all the unprincipled nobles of the Court. He knew the atrocities of which they were capable, and he trembled to think of her

unprotected state. Then La Beauce proudly thought of the confidence he had in this woman. Would virtue suffer from any trial? No. And, again, might not all these troubles turn her heart towards him? Might not she find the Couronne d'Or was not a fitting place for her? And he was partly comforted by the thought. He would wait a day or two before he again presented himself. He would hurry nothing. He would even return to Sèvres and study the character of this father before he risked his declaration. For, come what might, he was determined to make Virginie his wife.

At the Couronne d'Or things had not gone pleasantly. Jacques' temper had been quite upset by the scene so foolishly brought about by the Vicomte d'Aubray. Naturally of an irritable, highly nervous disposition, Jacques was made restless and miserable by the constant thought of the danger to which his daughter was exposed. And it must be remembered that he had been brought up under the old régime, where one of the class called noble was quite a being apart. To those who live in the latter half of the nineteenth century, the awe inspired by rank is quite incomprehensible; but in France, before the taking of the Bastille, people of Jacques' class trembled to think that, for thwarting anyone in favour at Court, a *lettre de cachet* might be used, and instant incarceration procured. It is true that under the mild reign of Louis XVI. these terrible weapons of tyranny were rarely used. Popular tradition, however, lasts through ages, and stories of the atrocities of the Regency still lived among the people. Jacques then, though personally brave, trembled before these people, whom he had always feared, but whom he now got to hate. All his old theories were gradually upset. How was a man to live and let live under a tyranny such as there was in France? Rousselet's 'Rights of Man,' the 'Social Contract' of Jean Jacques, anything was better than the superiority of these nobles who respected no man's home, were ready to outrage the honour of any family, and would use violence on the slightest provocation.

So poor Jacques grew quite querulous, and Rousselet, instead of trying to calm his friend, contributed greatly to his excitement. In his jealous fear lest any of these gay young sparks should excite the affection of Virginie, in his dread of the unknown lover who he felt must come to take her away from him, Rousselet was constant in his abuse of privileged classes and loud in condemnation of their unprincipled conduct.

Thus, while the crowds of courtiers and men of the long robe passed and repassed to Versailles, where the States-General were now assembled, and the battle between class and class was being fought out, while the nobles and clergy refused to sit with the Lower House, and were foolishly encouraged in their refusal by the Court, Jacques le Blanc was laying in a stock of hatred against these nobles, and, his nerves being irritated, his tongue was ever raging about the Couronne d'Or, where the domestics had but a bad time.

The morning of the day after the affray, the Capitaine Pinard rode up to the Couronne d'Or. Shouting to an ostler, who was lazily lounging about the door of the stable yard, the one-eyed Capitaine leisurely swung himself from the saddle, tossed the reins to the boy, smoothed his dress, cocked his hat, taking care to hide his blind eye, and swaggered into the inn.

The kitchen or house-place was full of people, the great fire was all aglow, and before it, and on the closed stove by its side, were roasting, stewing, and boiling many savoury dishes. The Capitaine gave a sniff of satisfaction. Then, finding himself unnoticed, he sauntered to an unoccupied table, and, striking it impatiently with his riding whip, glared around.

It so happened Maître Jacques was close by, and, turning to the noise, recognised Pinard at once as one of those who aided in the assault on his front door. Too politic to make any scandal in his house, he advanced to the table.

‘What does monsieur require?’ he asked politely.

‘*Jarne Dieu!*’ cried the Capitaine, whose haughtiness to an innkeeper was very different to his obsequiousness to men of rank. ‘Sieur le Blanc, I thirst! And, moreover, the goodly smell that rises from thy fleshpots, which would cause the Israelites to forget Egypt, reminds me that the hour of *déjeuner* has come. Serve me of thy best.’

Jacques’ little eyes glittered with resentment, but he held his peace. It was not for him to quarrel with his customers without reason. So he took the Capitaine’s orders, and went his way to see them carried out. Soon a smoking chicken, artfully served in a *sauce piquante*, was placed before the warrior, who had maintained a dignified, but observant, position while waiting for his food. It was Pierre the apprentice who served him, he noticed, and not Jacques. Whereupon he turned upon the boy, and, with a great oath, bade him go for his master. Pierre delivered the message, and Jacques, without hurrying himself, addressing a

word here, giving a reprimand there, approached the fiery Capitaine.

'Sacred head of my ancestors!' swore Pinard. 'Where are the manners of this generation? When people of my quality come to thy house, thou oughtest to show them civility, and bring their dishes thyself. But there,' said he, waving his hand, 'I forgive thee, for I have need of thy fat presence. Sit thee down: fill thy glass.'

Jacques stood uncertain.

'Sit, I say,' cried the Capitaine, 'or by the soul of St. Dennis I'll make thee swallow thy glass as well as thy wine.'

Jacques grew pale with rage. He sat down, however, feeling it necessary for him to avoid a scene, especially after the scandal of the day before.

Pinard, attributing Jacques' paleness to cowardice, swaggered all the more.

'*Ventre St. Gris*, as said good King Henry, Jacques le Blanc, thy cooking does thee credit, and thy Burgundy is worthy of thy sauce. Fill up thy glass, my knight of the stewpan, and we will drink a toast together.'

'Pardon me, I drink not at this time of day.'

'Is thy wine so bad, then?'

'Nay, monsieur has commended it this minute.'

'Is my company distasteful perchance?'

Jacques glanced round the room.

'Monsieur,' he said, 'your orders have been performed, and what cheer there is in my house is at your command, on payment, as becomes this house of entertainment; but in the matter of drinking I must excuse myself. It is not my habit to drink with one customer while others require my attention.'

Jacques spoke with some firmness, and Pinard was surprised.

'How, then, can I propose my toast, or procure the information I wish to obtain?'

'Monsieur can drink to whom he pleases; and as for information, I am at monsieur's service.'

Pinard leered at Jacques as he filled his glass.

'I propose the health of a pair of fine eyes, whose mistress, I am told, lives here—eyes that have not their match in France. See thou,' he whispered confidentially, leaning over the table, 'many have risen through less to regal splendour. Between ourselves, and we are both men of the world, a petticoat is a wondrous

thing—at one moment in an inn; at the next, flaunting it among the great and noble.’

‘Of whom do you speak?’ asked Jacques, trembling with fury.

‘Oh, the wily fox! Of course he cannot guess.’

‘There is no such woman here,’ gasped Jacques, trying to control himself.

‘Pardon me. Thou oughtest to know—thou who art, they say, her father—though, without offence, she could not have got those eyes from thee.’

Pinard might have been excused the remark. Jacques’ eyes at that moment were not beautiful, being filled with anger. Nevertheless, he managed to restrain himself.

‘On whose part do you come?’ he asked.

‘On the part of one who is generosity itself, who sits high among the great of the land, who offers thee anything thou mayest ask; and as for thy daughter—’

Here Jacques leaped up. He dashed at the astonished Pinard, and, seizing him as he had done the boy the day before, he administered several hearty cuffs; then, dragging him to the door, kicking him the while, he forced him down the steps, and, with a final effort, lifted and soused him into the large horse-trough that stood opposite the entrance of the inn. So sudden had been the assault that Pinard, taken unawares, had no time to recover himself. He made several ineffectual efforts to reach his sword, but it got twisted in between his legs; and when he struggled forth from the trough, he found the trusty weapon so bent that it was impossible to draw it forth from its scabbard; nor was his position rendered more tolerable by the derisive cheers and laughter of the onlookers, who now crowded from the vast kitchen. In vain did he make several efforts to reach the triumphant Jacques, who stood, breathless with unwonted exertion, with a heavy bludgeon in his hand, ready for every emergency. Many strong arms stayed his headlong course.

‘Villain!’ he cried, shaking his fist at his adversary. ‘Thinkest thou I am to be so treated? I, Capitaine Pinard, who have fought the enemies of my country? I’ll be revenged, foul wineskin! I’ll let out all the miserable liquid thou hast stuffed into that fat paunch.’

‘Let him alone! Capitaine or no Capitaine, what care I?’ shouted Jacques in reply, standing on the top of the steps in front of his own door. ‘Am I to be insulted by this vile pander?’

Soldier indeed! Let him come, and I'll soon beat the soldier out of him.'

But Pinard felt that the moment had not come for revenge. Swearing, gesticulating, and shaking his fist every few yards, he made his way to the stables, where, having partially relieved his irritation by cuffing an unoffending stable boy, he finally mounted his sorry steed, and, again threatening with his fist, metaphorically shaking the dust (in his case it was the mud) off his feet, he sulkily trotted away.

In truth, Jacques, instructed by the events of the day before, had secured the assistance of several strong young fellows, whom, by the promise of a limited amount of drink, he retained on his premises in case of need. Had it not been for their timely aid, the vengeance of Pinard might have assumed a tentative form.

CHAPTER X.

LA BEAUCE PAYS A SECOND VISIT TO SEVRES.

ON the afternoon of that day, having walked a little way towards Paris with some of his neighbours—a most unusual thing with him, as he rarely left his business—Jacques, casting his eyes up to the Couronne d'Or with the proud feeling of proprietorship, saw his daughter sitting at her window in her usual pensive position. She looked like a lovely picture; but the sight was intolerable to him. Surely this it was that attracted the attention of his hated persecutors. It was through his daughter's fault that they came troubling his house. He must stop this, once and for all. So, with red and angry face, he re-entered his house, ran upstairs, and burst open the door of Virginie's room, disturbing by his sudden appearance, with his eyes flashing with passion, as beautiful a dream as ever was dreamed by lovesick maiden. It was of La Beauce!

'Virginie,' he cried, 'art thou not ashamed to sit there flaunting from the window?'

Virginie gazed at him with astonishment.

'What have I done, father?' she asked simply.

'Done!' cried Jacques. 'Thou pretendest simplicity. Wouldst thou bring disgrace upon us? Was it this they taught thee at the convent—ogling men from thy windows?' He paused—it was from want of breath.

'If thou wishest me not to sit at the window, I will not do so,' said the surprised girl.

'Wish her!' shouted Jacques, gathering fury as he proceeded. 'Listen to her! Can she think I wish her to parade her charms? And she smiles too! Thinkest thou I did not see thee smile at that mad boy yesterday? Wilt thou encourage the attentions of every man who comes to the house? For shame, for shame!'

It was Virginie's turn to get red. She blushed scarlet.

'Father!' she cried, 'how canst thou say this?'

'And I mean it. Let me not catch thee at thy window again. Dost thou hear? Answer!'

'I hear,' said Virginie in a low voice.

'Then let me be obeyed,' and Jacques shook his finger ominously. 'Let us have no more scenes like the one yesterday.' With that he left the room, assured he had but done his duty towards his daughter, and utterly unconscious of the wound he had given. He had no wish to be unkind. It was his very affection for Virginie that caused his anxiety, and it was the very excess of his affection that raised the first cloud between them.

For Virginie was deeply hurt. She had, in fact, been thinking of La Beauce when her father appeared. Surely there was no harm in that? Had she not given him up, refused him from a feeling of duty, of which duty her gratitude to this very father formed part? It was the first unkind word he had ever addressed her, but that she could have borne. It was the base suspicion that hurt her. She had never been suspected before. At Chartres she had always been treated with confidence; she had been the favoured pupil, in whom every one trusted; and now to be accused of ogling men from the window! It was too horrible! Her indignation was the more intense from her entire innocence. She really did not quite understand. Was it possible she had encouraged that boy at whom she had laughed from sheer amusement? Was this what the world called encouragement? Alas, what a wicked world it was!

So she passed her time, sometimes in tears, sometimes in a state of rebellion against this domestic tyranny. Nor did she show herself downstairs all that day. Jacques himself appeared towards evening. He had not been able to realise to himself that perhaps his rebuke had caused the headache of which his daughter complained. He had quite forgotten the roughness of his

manner; indeed, he was utterly unconscious of having lost his temper. It was such a common occurrence with this worthy man. He came, his good humour restored, to recommend some simple nostrum for his daughter's ailment. Virginie, too proud to allude to what had passed, was, it must be confessed, even more hurt by this apparent indifference than if her father had continued to show his unreasoning irritability.

Her thoughts insensibly wandered back to the pleasant days of Chartres. Was it to be thus treated that she had refused the hand of the man she loved? The sight of him again had awakened all her affection. What right had she to be hard upon him? Was he not, after all, a better judge than she? Was he not a man of the world, while she was but an inexperienced school-girl? With such thoughts working constantly in her brain, mixing her love with a wild regret which she had never felt before, Virginie spent the next two days.

Although the Comte de la Beauce thought it prudent not to present himself at the Couronne d'Or for a few days, his interview with Pinard had so alarmed him that he deemed it wise to have a watch kept on the house lest Virginie should be troubled by the plots of the direputable Capitaine. His trusty emissary brought him word of the fracas in which Jacques had ejected his adversary. Of the scene between the father and daughter he of course knew nothing, but it was also reported to him that Virginie had seldom appeared since that day. He could with difficulty restrain his impatience; but the third day after his interview with Jacques he determined to present himself to see how the land lay, and if possible to have some talk with Virginie.

He first sought out his cousin, whom he easily persuaded to accompany him. St. Aubray was the son of the uncle who had brought up La Beauce himself, and, being some ten years younger, regarded the Comte as an elder brother. It must be owned he looked on his return to the scene of his unfortunate escapade as a joke. 'Apologise? Of course he would apologise if his cousin wished it. The young lady was so pretty he would willingly ride to Sèvres to see her.'

'My dear François,' answered La Beauce gravely, 'I beg you will treat this young lady with respect. I met her at our aunt's at Chartres, where she was the friend of our cousin Célimène, having been educated at the same convent.'

'Fancy that old wineskin having such a daughter!' laughed François. As they rode to Sèvres he was full of merriment at

the idea, nor did the Comte restrain his hilarity, being afraid to trust so scatterbrain a lad with his secret. Virginie, though she took care not to present herself at the window, could not resist the pleasure of looking over the pleasant scene, while she herself was shielded from view. Thus it was she caught sight of the Comte and his cousin as they rode towards the Couronne d'Or. For a casual remark of St. Aubray's, that he had first seen this beautiful creature at her window coming from Paris, had caused them to make a *détour* in the hopes of seeing a like vision. Alas! the window was untenanted. La Beauce, however, was reassured as he passed, for his ear faintly distinguished the well-remembered voice singing his favourite song, '*Plaisir d'amour*,' which she had sung the first day he ever saw her.

Jacques le Blanc was in a better temper that day. His triumph over Pinard had been so complete, his powers had won such commendation from his neighbours, that he was almost reassured as to the future. Moreover, he had several times sauntered forth on the Paris road, and on no occasion had he found Virginie at her window. He was pleased, therefore, to find his orders had been obeyed, and, finding such ready obedience yielded to them, was the more certain he had been right to assert his authority. So, when the two young men rode up to the door, though he recognised them at once, he received them with his usual bow and cheery welcome. La Beauce civilly returned his salutation, and, as he alighted from his horse, cried,—

'*Maître le Blanc*, I have brought back my silly cousin, the Vicomte de St. Aubray, who is desirous of apologising for his foolish conduct.'

'Yes, monsieur,' said St. Aubray. 'My cousin says but the truth. It was a foolish escapade, the result of having a head not too heavily weighted with brains. You treated me as I deserved, and I hope you will not only pardon us, but allow us to profit by the admirable entertainment of your home.' He spoke with a charming smile, and looked so like a spoilt boy, that Jacques, notwithstanding his suspicions, was quite disarmed.

'Ah, monsieur,' he answered, 'say no more. A father is bound to be on his guard.'

'Monsieur is right when he has such a daughter,' said St. Aubray, still smiling.

Jacques gave a quick glance at the speaker, but La Beauce stopped his laughing cousin.

'*Maître le Blanc*,' he said, 'we hear you are the best *chef*

out of Paris, and we desire to judge for ourselves; can you, therefore, give us to eat?’

Now, Jacques was not above professional pride. He was always glad to show his skill where he thought it would be thoroughly appreciated. Besides, he was in a good humour, and knew Virginie was not likely to appear. ‘Only wait, monsieur,’ he said with a pleased gesture of his fat hand, ‘and I promise that even in Paris monsieur will not be better served.’

He led them to a private room looking over his garden, and took their orders, pointing out what he thought was in season and expatiating on his skill. For Jacques was an artist and delighted in his work. He quite forgot his troubles in the pleasure he had in arranging this *déjeuner*. He had, indeed, cast an uneasy glance upwards, as he showed his guests up the very stair that led to Virginie’s room; but it was more from habit than fear; and when he saw her door was shut, he was content, and retired to his pots and pans, absorbed in his approaching triumph.

In truth this good fellow was never long in a bad temper. He hated aristocrats when he had nothing else to think of, but he was fully alive to his own interests, and knew full well it was through this class that he lived and had the means of showing his talent. It was only when Virginie was mentioned that his whole being seemed to change. Then he became suspicious, irritable, and unreasonable.

Left alone, the two young men were very differently moved. St. Aubray threw himself into a chair and burst into a merry peal of laughter.

‘I must own, Etienne,’ he laughed, ‘this is the first time one of my name has apologised to a *bourgeois*. Saprستي, I was so tickled by the fun of the thing, that I well-nigh laughed in his face. Sawest thou ever anything so comic as his look when he recognised me?’

La Beauce was, on the contrary, very grave. He walked to the window and looked out into the garden. Originally a *potager*, or kitchen garden, he noticed an undue proportion of flowers, and divined that Virginie, whose love of flowers he well knew, was the ruling spirit of the place. He envied the flowers, whose dainty stems, so carefully tied up and arranged, had probably touched her soft hand, and felt her breath as she leaned over them. And, full of his love for Virginie, he turned to his cousin and said gravely,—

‘François, thou didst ask me why I brought thee back here, and I own I did not give thee the right reason; but now, when thy

ignorance might do me a real hurt, I had better make a clean breast of it. The girl whom thou in thy boyish folly didst insult has been asked by me to be my wife.'

St. Aubray started to his feet. 'Thy wife!' he cried with astonishment.

'Even so,' returned La Beauce. 'I met her at my aunt's at Chartres, and I found her as perfect in character as she is in face. I knew not who she was, nor did I much care, for I loved her and still love her.'

'And she?'

'She refused me,' said La Beauce sadly.

'How,' cried St. Aubray, 'refused thy hand? Do we live in an enchanted age? Truly, things have changed when the daughter of an innkeeper refuses to be the Comtesse de la Beauce!'

There was a sneer in the young fellow's tone that revealed the prejudice of his class.

'She behaved as only an angel would,' said La Beauce; 'she considered me more than herself, and wished to spare me the reproaches of men like thyself, who would esteem such a marriage a *mésalliance*!'

'And thou broughtest me here——' began St. Aubray.

'To try to get to see her and persuade her to change her mind.'

'Thanks, my cousin,' said St. Aubray sarcastically; but his better nature asserted itself, and he held out his hand. 'Forgive me, Étienne,' he said affectionately; 'I have always thought thee my superior in wisdom—not saying much that—' he added smilingly. 'I am but a feather-brained boy, and it is not for me to judge. Tell me what thou wishest me to do or say, and I will do my best to help thee—if it were only to serve out old Boniface, the father.'

'I knew thy good heart,' said La Beauce, taking his hand. 'Only do thou watch over thy unruly tongue, and say nothing to arouse the suspicions of the father.'

'And why,' cried St. Aubray, 'why not at once broach the subject to the fond parent?'

'Not so fast,' rejoined La Beauce; 'I do not wish to risk a refusal.'

'Small fear of that,' said his cousin.

'I do not know. Some of these *bourgeois* have peculiar ideas, and she herself may have talked her father over to her own views,

though I don't think she has, or he would have shown more surprise at hearing my name.'

'Best take the citadel by assault,' quoth the gay St. Aubray.

'To tell thee the truth, I dare not risk a failure, and have determined to study the father before I commit myself.'

There was silence between them. St. Aubray relieved his surprise by whistling softly a favourite and popular air. La Beauce walked back to the window, from which he gazed absently. Suddenly his attention was arrested by the appearance of Louison, Virginie's maid, who came from the house and busied herself picking flowers. She paused in her occupation to look round cautiously, as though she was anxious to ascertain whether she was observed, and then, glancing towards the window of their room, which was on the first floor, she suddenly beamed with smiles. La Beauce, who was watching her with eager eyes, judged, and judged rightly, that she was Virginie's maid, possibly sent by Virginie herself. He therefore beckoned to her, and, pulling out from his pocket a letter, with which he came provided, wrapped in it a louis d'or, and dropped it out of the window. Louison, first looking round, darted on the letter and slipped it into her pocket. This little scene, though it gave great encouragement to La Beauce, also somewhat surprised him. There was evidently something wrong. The mystery about this girl was so different from Virginie's frank and honest nature. He was therefore more than ever satisfied with his determination to act with great prudence.

At that moment Jacques le Blanc entered the room. 'Messieurs,' he said, 'the *déjeuner* will be shortly ready. What wine would your excellencies desire?'

'We shall leave that to you, my friend,' said La Beauce.

'Then,' said Jacques, commanding attention by a wave of his fat hand, 'I shall take on myself to recommend an excellent Burgundy that my father and predecessor himself bottled some twenty-five years ago. Rest assured it is a good wine.' And he kissed his finger-tips with rapture as though he was saluting the object of his highest adoration. Having relieved his feelings by this gesture, he bustled from the room intent on his business, and consequently oblivious of all else. La Beauce then, walking to and fro the while, and keeping an anxious watch from the window, told his cousin all that we know happened at Chartres, not the least blaming Virginie, but, on the contrary, speaking of her with all the ecstatic admiration of a lover. St. Aubray was an excellent listener. He never interrupted, never asked questions;

he was too much astonished even to laugh. Here was this sage cousin, whom he always looked up to as a model of wisdom, as madly, wildly in love as a boy fresh from school, and on the point of committing an imprudence which he, St. Aubray, madeap though he was, would never have conceived possible. 'What if the girl were beautiful? Why marriage?' thought this young reprobate. Happily his respect for his cousin made him hold his tongue.

But though La Beauce's story took a full quarter of an hour in telling, and though during that time he watched the garden eagerly, Louison did not re-appear, nor was there any sign that his letter had reached Virginie's hands.

Soon the *déjeuner* was served under the immediate superintendence of Jacques himself, who, as he uncovered each dish, waited in anxious expectation to hear the verdict of the two young men. Everything was excellent; St. Aubray was loud in his praise; and, La Beauce joining in the commendation, Jacques beamed with gratification. Soon, after the manner of the time, they invited their worthy host to sit and join in tasting his excellent wine, and Jacques, nothing loath, complied. It was delightful to see the simple fellow holding his glass to the light and smelling it, passing the wine to and fro under his nose, while his face, at first anxious, grew reassured, and finally, on sipping a few drops, positively glowed with pleasure.

'See you, messieurs,' he cried, holding the glass up again, and pointing to it with an approving gesture. 'That *is* a glass of wine! My good father had it straight from the vineyard by favour of the intendant of M. le Marquis, who, as the world knows, is the owner of the Clos Vougeot. It has not lost, but gained, by the twenty-five years' bottling. A prince of wines!' he cried, giving another sip, and then he sighed.

'What makes you sigh, Maître le Blanc?' asked La Beauce.

'Ab, monsieur, many things have happened since that wine was bottled. Many people have lived and died.' Here he sighed again.

'*Parbleu*, I for one have been born,' cried St. Aubray.

'And you yourself have had children, then?' said La Beauce; 'the young lady I saw the other day?'

'Yes,' said Jacques, 'she has been born and her mother has died. But there, let us talk no more about it.'

'Here's to her health,' said St. Aubray; 'as beautiful a woman as there is to be found in France.'

Jacques put down his glass. He seemed to freeze up.

'Monsieur,' he said in a dry hard voice, 'my daughter is a good girl; I do not consider her good looks, though they remind me of her dead mother. Nor do I care to talk about her in the presence of gentlemen so much above her in station.'

'But you ought to be proud,' began St. Aubray.

'Monsieur will please to excuse my alluding to the subject.'

'Come, Maître le Blanc, another glass,' urged La Beauce. Jacques was persuaded to drink another glass, and even a third, of his favourite wine. He talked about all sorts of other things; of politics, and the news from the Château, of the past, of the present, of everything but his daughter. Nothing could draw another word from his lips about her. At last he excused himself, saying that his business demanded his presence, and escaped from the room; and La Beauce, casting a longing glance towards the garden that remained quite empty, at length thought it time to return home. He was much disappointed. He had hoped that this Le Blanc was a garrulous man, and had thought it would have been easy to draw him out about his daughter. The man's reticence annoyed him. He had half-expected to have seen Virginie, or at least to have had some answer to his letter. He looked round the great kitchen, but the ruddy-faced Louison was not there, and Jacques himself bowing them out, and politely holding their stirrups as they mounted, had a grave and anxious look. 'Good Heavens!' he thought, 'is it possible Virginie can be ill?' But no; he had heard her singing. And yet all this mystery was unaccountable.

CHAPTER XI.

HESITATION.

MEANWHILE Virginie, sitting alone in her room, was distracted by the idea that La Beauce was again in the house. For what had he come? Could he be so unwise as to ask her father's consent? After the scene she had gone through, what answer could there be if he should ask her hand? So thought she, anxious that her father should not do the very thing she herself had gloried in doing! These last two months this poor girl had been striving her best to smother her love. She tried all she could to make herself believe she did not regret her refusal. She kept on reminding herself that all was at an end—that her love was as

dead as the leaves of last autumn. What if she chose to keep this dead love cherished in her bosom? Could she make it green and alive again? Poor Virginie! Her love was not dead as she believed. The sight of this man three days ago had revived all her old feeling towards him. And now, when she had seen him coming back again, the certainty that his love had not changed was an inexpressible comfort to her. It was intolerable to her to know that he was in the house close to her, and she sitting all alone unable to go to meet him. Yet, with the terrible wrath of her father still so fresh in her mind, she dared not stir. What could she do? She could surely find out what was passing.

At last she made up her mind to send Louison into the garden, and through the house, to ascertain where these strangers were, and what that terrible young man who had caused so much trouble two days ago could possibly be doing. Louison was not long away. She came back radiant.

'Mademoiselle,' she said, 'bade me watch for the younger of the two messieurs. Mademoiselle was wrong not to trust me. What could mademoiselle give for something I have?'

Virginie was too proud to ask questions, and bade Louison say what she had to say shortly.

But Louison was not to be done out of her enjoyment of this secret, which she thought she had discovered.

'Only think,' said she; 'the tall one was at the window, and he looked at me as though to say, "I wonder whether you are her *bonne*?" and I nodded, when—what do you think, mademoiselle?'

'Well?' asked Virginie, who could not restrain a sign of eagerness in her question, 'what was it?'

The ruddy countenance of Louison expanded into the broadest of smiles. She nodded and ducked in the most extraordinary manner.

'Why dost thou not speak, child?' asked Virginie again.

'Ah, mademoiselle, monsieur is most handsome and generous. What do you think he did?'

'How can I tell?' said Virginie crossly.

'He leant out of the window, and with the greatest dexterity tossed me something.'

'What was it?' asked the girl eagerly.

The aggravating Louison produced the louis d'or La Beauce had thrown her, showing it in the palm of her hand with great triumph. Virginie turned away in disgust. Behind her back Louison nodded her head, writhing with suppressed merriment.

‘Mademoiselle asks no more?’ she inquired when she had composed her features.

‘Nothing,’ said Virginie shortly.

‘Mademoiselle does not ask what else he threw me? Because, perhaps I am wrong, somehow I thought this letter might be for her.’

Virginie turned quickly round. The letter was in Louison’s hands. She was turning it over, trying to act the simpleton, as though she did not perfectly know that it was for her mistress.

Virginie held out her trembling hand. She felt the blushes mount to her cheeks, yet she contrived to control herself sufficiently to say quietly,—

‘Give it to me, child, and I will tell thee.’

She took the letter and looked wistfully at it, while Louison stood by, smiling.

‘Mademoiselle opens not the letter,’ at length remarked the impatient girl.

Still Virginie sat absorbed in thought.

‘If mademoiselle opens not the letter, how can she give me an answer?’ observed Louison gravely.

‘What dost thou mean?’ asked Virginie, rousing herself.

‘Only this,’ said the maid, leaning over her and speaking in a half-whisper. ‘If mademoiselle would like an answer given, I will take it to the end of the town, and there deliver it, so that monsieur, the father of mademoiselle, perceive me not.’

‘And how?’ said Virginie in a state of indecision, ‘how dost thou know which way these gentlemen are riding?’

‘Because I questioned the groom and he told me—the Comte de la Beauce—that is his name, is it not, mademoiselle?—is living in Versailles.’

Still Virginie could not make up her mind. She doubted whether she ought to open this letter. She knew what it would contain. She was certain she should not answer it. Then said her heart, ‘Why not open it?’ She pined for some words of love. For the last three days, and especially since the day of her father’s wrath, she had thought of nothing but the happy time she had spent at the house of Madame de la Rosière. What harm, then, in seeing whether he had changed his mind since he had discovered her abode, and knew who she was? It is said, when a woman hesitates, she is lost. Virginie found fifty reasons for breaking the seal, and in the end, from her desire to know its contents, convinced herself that it was her duty to open it. She

turned it over to break the seal, but she caught sight of Louison's eager face, and she stopped.

'Louison,' she said, 'leave me for a moment. I will call thee when I have settled what I shall answer.'

Louison understood—what woman would not?—and with a broad grin she withdrew. At the door she turned.

'Ah, mademoiselle, believe me, what you have to do you had better do quickly,' she cried, and shut the door.

But, even when she was alone, Virginie could not make up her mind. Most good women glory in the thought that by their self-denial the loved one, whoever he may be, is the better and happier. They delight in self-sacrifice. Virginie was of this class. The poor girl was so certain she had done right in sacrificing her affections that she was afraid of anything that might cause her to doubt. The very fact that this letter contained a renewed declaration of love made her dread to read it. It gave her such pleasure merely to hold it in her hand; could she be sure the contents would not upset all her good resolves? No! She felt confident she should never change her determination. Never! And so she should have the grim satisfaction of again immolating herself for his good. Then her thoughts wandered again to the day she had last seen him at Chartres; his pale face seemed to rise before her as she had caught sight of it then, at the Convent church, where she had solemnly repeated to herself that she would never yield to her love, as it would be to his detriment, while the great organ rolled, and the solemn chaunts filled the air in ratification of her resolve. Could she change now? Was all the sacrifice to be on his side? Could she accept happiness on such terms? So she still mused, still holding the letter, when Louison re-entered.

'What, mademoiselle, is it so bad as that?' she cried, with a grave face. 'Dare not mademoiselle open the letter?'

'Thou talkest too fast, Louison,' said Virginie, blushing.

'Courage, mademoiselle,' said Louison; then, coming quite close, she whispered mysteriously, 'They eat, and monsieur your father sits with them. Quick with your answer, then, that I may slip out unperceived.'

Mechanically Virginie broke open the letter. She began reading, and was so absorbed that she forgot the presence of her maid. The letter contained what anyone can imagine. La Beauce renewed his offer of marriage. He gently reproached Virginie for not telling him about her father. He was an honest man—

what father could be more? Then he prayed her to forget what she had said, and allow him to ask Monsieur le Blanc in due form to grant him the hand of his daughter. He loved her all the better for her refusal. He understood her unselfish motives. But she had confessed to him that she loved him, and he believed her in that as he did in everything. If it were so, let her heart plead for him. He besought her to answer him and direct him what to do. If he did not receive an answer he would at once address himself to her father, who would, he felt confident, see matters in their true light. There was much more in the letter—much of that love which fills all love-letters, and which, it must be confessed, was balm to the heart of poor Virginie, in whose eyes the happy tears stood when she had finished reading.

‘*Eh bien, mademoiselle!*’ cried Louison, ‘you have read it at last! Now prepare the answer quick.’

She looked up. The answer? Was there to be any? Was she to let him go to her father? No! She could not bear that, for, in her father’s present frame of mind, she could not rely on his answer; and, if he refused, her dream would be past indeed. It was to be only a dream, of course; at least let it last a little longer. It was so sweet to think La Beauce loved her!

So she determined to write to beg him for the present not to go to her father. A few words would suffice. She sat down to write. What should it be? Her heart was so full. It was impossible to put down half she felt. Louison had to remind her she had not begun.

‘Be quick, mademoiselle. Time flies, and *déjeuners* last not for ever,’ she cried.

Were it not better to write shortly and beg his address that she might have more time to think of her final answer? Alas! who has not thus put off the fatal hour? Yes, she must have more time. So she wrote that she had received his letter, that she had not changed. ‘Only, monsieur,’ she wrote, ‘do not go to my father till you hear from me. He has had so much anxiety since the day on which you stopped the bloodshed that might have ruined us all, that he is not fit to judge. I pray you, tell the bearer where I can address you—and, above all, come not near the house.’ She signed the letter simply ‘Virginie.’ Louison would not wait for any address, but snatched the letter as soon as it was folded, and fled from the room. Perhaps she feared Virginie might change her mind, and, indeed, it was too likely she might have done so.

When she was once more alone, Virginie re-read the precious letter, and then placed it near her heart. Nor had she felt so happy since she came to the Couronne d'Or. And yet, strange contradiction, she would have declared, in perfect good faith, her fixed determination never to marry La Beauce!

It must be owned, as she thought over this last act of hers, she was surprised at herself for having so far yielded to her inclinations as to answer at all. Before the scene with her father, she certainly would not have done so. To deceive anyone who trusted her was contrary to her nature. But the distrust shown towards her, the strange accusation made by her father, for whose anger she made no allowance, had wounded her so deeply that she felt she must have the consolation of knowing that someone loved her, to keep her from utter desolation. This man at least trusted her, and her heart went out to him. It was the little rift in the strong wall that bound her pent-up feelings, of which she herself was quite unaware. Like a flaw in a mighty dam, it of itself kept widening. At present she was full of confidence in herself, she felt strong to refuse. Who has not felt such confidence, and how many have been able to act up to it?

La Beauce and his cousin rode on their way to Versailles in silence. St. Aubray indeed was ready enough to talk. He made many jokes on Jacques and his reticence; but his companion was not in the humour to talk, and, as most conversations (except when a man is in love, and then if he talk at all he will talk alone) require at least two to be sustained, St. Aubray was obliged to lapse into silence. He had to content himself with whistling, which requires no answer, and inwardly cursing his luck at having a dull ride before him with a lovesick man for a companion. So they rode up the street, their horses' hoofs clattering on the pavement. They took but little heed of Rousselet, whom they passed on the way, nor did they notice the ominous scowl on his hard features. Once free of the town, St. Aubray quickened his pace, and La Beauce mechanically did the same; but they had gone but a few hundred yards when the latter uttered a cry of delight and reined up his horse. St. Aubray, carried on by his impetuosity some distance before he could turn, was surprised to see his cousin in eager conversation with a buxom-looking girl in a peasant dress, who was nodding and ducking in a way that made the young man laugh. He discreetly kept out of earshot and continued his whistling, varying his amusement by making his horse execute a series of curvets and demivolts, such as it was the fashion of the

day to teach in the schools of equitation frequented by the nobility. In this part of the education of a gentleman St. Aubray was a proficient.

La Beauce had instantly recognised his acquaintance of the garden. He quickly brought his horse to her side.

‘What answer?’ he asked eagerly.

‘Holy Virgin, how you frightened me!’ cried Louison with affected terror, but grinning at the same time.

‘Have you brought an answer?’ again demanded La Beauce. Louison looked down the road towards Sèvres, then up towards Versailles; then on a sudden she began ducking and nodding like a demented Mandarin, which was her simple way of showing her satisfaction.

‘It is all right, monsieur,’ she said in a patronising manner; ‘mademoiselle loves you, of that be assured.’

‘But,’ cried La Beauce, ‘has she sent no message?’

‘Heavens! Is it not enough to be loved by a beautiful lady? Oh, these men, these men!’—and Louison sighed as though the heart of man was an open book to her, in which she had read all the treachery of the past.

‘Did mademoiselle send you to tell me this?’

‘Not exactly; I, heaven be praised! saw it in a moment when I gave her monsieur’s letter. Ah! if monsieur only knew how unhappy mademoiselle has been! But there! What do you men know or care? And monsieur, the father of mademoiselle, has been so violent, accusing her of all kinds of infamies. He is a dolt, with no eyes in his head. He does not guess! How came he to have such a daughter—with his red face and his fat paunch, like that?’ And Louison swelled herself out in imitation of Jacques le Blanc, and roared with laughter.

What was La Beauce to do? He was on thorns; he felt inclined to strike the laughing Louison with his whip. But she seemed bent on having her joke out, and was quite unconscious of his irritation. There was nothing for it but to wait her leisure with the best grace he could command. At length he asked calmly,—

‘Then mademoiselle has sent no answer?’

‘Who said so?’ cried Louison, stopping her laughter. ‘See!’ and she began fumbling in her pocket, while La Beauce had again to wait with eager outstretched hand.

Louison’s pocket was deep, and as full of incongruous items as a schoolboy’s. She seemed to the impatient La Beauce to be

hours before she came to Virginie's letter, and when she did produce it, it was in so crumpled a state that she took several minutes smoothing it before she would hand it to the Comte.

'How wrong of me to be so careless!' she cried; 'I feared it might be seen, and so hid it deep down. She need have had no fear. The most lynx-eyed of detectives could never have probed the depth of that confused pocket.

At length La Beauce received the letter. He tore it open and eagerly read the contents. There was not much there, but enough to make him hope. Had not Virginie consented to write, and did she not half-promise to write again? He hastily produced a silver-pointed pencil, and, tearing off the corner of Virginie's letter, wrote,—

'I shall obey you in the expectation of another letter. My address is No. 1, Place St. Louis, Versailles.'

This he handed back to Louison, impressing on her the necessity of not losing it. He would have forced another gold coin on the ruddy messenger had not she stoutly protested.

'No, monsieur,' she said, 'I have already been well paid for what I would willingly have done from love of my mistress. Adieu, monsieur.' Here she waved her hand. 'Rest content, I watch over her. She is safe,' and with this comforting assurance she placed La Beauce's short note in her pocket and turned to walk away.

But she shortly turned again and nodded and ducked, slapping her pocket; and so, turning every few yards to perform the same extraordinary antics, she at last passed a bend in the road and disappeared.

La Beauce then put spurs to his horse and rejoined his impatient cousin, who, having exhausted every manœuvre of the equestrian art, and whistled all he knew of melody, was quite tired of waiting for him. St. Aubray had no reason to complain of his companion's dulness for the rest of the ride, for La Beauce had found his tongue and regained his spirits.

(To be continued.)

A Ballad of Bravery.

I. M.

DANIEL PERITON.

DIED AT JOHNSTOWN 1889.

ONE dreams it were not hard to die
 If then one's country came
 And brought—upon one's grave to lie—
 The flaunting flowers of fame.

Yet Fame is fleeting after all,
 And one would rather have
 The tears of those one loves to fall
 Upon one's new-made grave.

But it were best of all to give
 One's life up freely, when
 One knows one's name may never live
 As one who died for men.

There was a man—I know not, I,
 His station or his story—
 What matter they? I know him by
 His deed's undying glory.

I know his name and nothing more—
 To know the rest, what need?
 What care we what life went before
 That life's immortal deed?

The reservoir above the town
 Was swollen with the rains:
 Those who said 'Danger!' got a frown,
 Or laughter, for their pains.

A BALLAD OF BRAVERY.

Yet, by a leaky dam pent back
For rich men's pleasures, sleep
Three miles of water, still and black,
And very, very deep!

And from the skies and from the hills
The water still pours down,
And the lake slowly, slowly fills
That hangs above the town.

There was no thought of danger there :
They loved and laughed and wed ;
They kissed, because young love was fair,
And wept when love was dead.

And little children laughed and played
Round happy mothers' knees,
Who smiled to see them, undismayed
By all life's mysteries.

And men spent life and gathered gold,
And toiled for babes and wife,
And the sweet story still was told
That is as old as life.

Till, one bright evening, calm and still
The quiet valley lay,
And every peak and point and hill
Glowed in the dying day,

When, sudden, down the peaceful street
A sound of hoofs rang clear—
A horseman galloped furious, fleet,
Shouting for all to hear :

'The floods are out ! They're on us ! Fly !
Fly to the hills !' he cried.
The town's-folk laughed and mocked his cry,
And jeered as they replied :

'Yes, when we see the water!' 'Fly!'
The rider cried again.
'Fly!' echo cried as he tore by,
And still he rode amain.

He fled not to the hills, but on
He down the valley pressed.
Though these were lost, some might be won—
He still might save the rest!

All laughed and mocked—their bitter word
Pursued him like the wind.
One threw a stone at him—he heard
It strike the road behind.

His heart grew big, his eyes grew dim,
He cast one look the way
Where, on the hills, life beckoned him,
And hope and safety lay—

Then spurred again his horse's side,
All streaked with foam and sweat:
'Oh, God! let them believe!' he cried,
'And let me save them yet!'

(Ever such face hath fortune worn
To saint and hero brave—
Stoned, mocked, and martyred, laughed to scorn
By those they sought to save.

Their visions mocked by this world's gloom,
Their sacrifice despised,
And, worst of all, those lost for whom
Their lives were sacrificed.

A curse they hear in man's last word,
But God's first smile who sees?
We only see such deaths preferred
To any life by these!)

A BALLAD OF BRAVERY.

He rode on, fast as fire. Still 'Fly!'

He shouted—heard them say,
'The man is mad or drunk, else why
Foretell a flood to-day?'

A sudden thunderous crash! Then all
Men's hearts forgot to beat.
Forty feet high, a water wall
Came sweeping down the street!

'Now to the hills! The flood!' they cry.
Too late! Your chance is done—
The roaring water surges by,
And lo! your town is gone!

A moment since, your town was there,
A happy human nest;
Now waters wide sweep on and bear
Its ruin on their breast.

There is no town now, but instead
The waning light is shed
On the advancing water, spread
With dying and with dead.

As thick they lie as blossoms be
Upon a summer pool,
Where children shake the hawthorn tree
As they go home from school.

On, on the water sweeps. Men drown—
Float—lashed to wandering spars.
A mother lets her children down
Through their close nursery bars.

Drowned—drowned—all drowned! The mother lives
To curse too constant life.
A raft, a plank, a house-roof gives
A hope for child or wife.

Till, ere men sink, they see life's light
Swept by—crushed out—sucked down,
And see dear weak ones sink from sight
Before strong men can drown.

Houses and churches, bridge and boat,
And thousand clinging lives,
Wild masses on the torrent float—
Babes, mothers, sweethearts, wives !

Cry out to God, oh ! ye who can,
Before your doom shall fall,
And pray that He will save the man
Who tried to save you all.

.
There is no tongue can dare speak out,
No pen may dare to write,
No heart may bear to think about
The horrors of that night !

The whole town—crushed like splintered toys
Against the bridge—caught flame !
There are no words for those wrecked joys,
Those horrors have no name.

We sit in sheltered homes to-night,
With little ones at play ;
We can but clasp the children tight,
And turn our heads away !

For, when the morning broke again,
Then every bank was strewn
With corpses. There came frantic men
To search for those they'd known.

And little children, motherless !
And mothers, almost wild,
Who in and out the ruins press—
'My child—my little child !'

A BALLAD OF BRAVERY.

'My man is dead;' 'Where is my wife?'
'My lad is lost,' they call.
'His sweetheart's found.' Oh, cruel life!
Why not let death take all?

But, when the crash of death swept down,
One life at least was spared?
The man who rode to warn the town,
The man who did and dared?

No; death was kind, and let him go,
When life was at its height.
No baser flame his soul will know
Than burned in it that night.

To do brave deeds for desperate needs
Life's crown of glory is.
God! give me voice to sing such deeds,
And be my end like his!

E. NESBIT.

The History of an Infancy.

II.

THESE various recollections of other persons encourage me in the belief that mine are not abnormal, and consequently that they may have some interest, though whether the inferences I shall draw from them will be considered true and fair is perhaps doubtful.

I do not in the least remember any time when I did not expect night to come. Day was very long, night extremely short. The first date, I am sure, which began to be expected was Sunday. I began first to recognise, then to expect Sunday. Then the beautiful Boston bells rang, and the nurse wore her best gown. Between Sunday and Sunday was a very long time.

As locality has so much to do with all I felt, thought, and knew when under five years old, I venture to describe my first home as it then was.

My father's house stood in an open space on the outskirts of the small town of Boston. This space was called Southend. Fine houses such as that one are not generally built now at the edges of country towns. Four or five such stood on one side of Southend; on the other—the river side—there were three. First a very large and rather rambling place where my grandfather lived. Next to this was a small coachhouse, then some towering brick granaries of most picturesque and ancient appearance, and next my father's house with hardly anything to divide it from them. At the back of that house was a garden, and then the river. It was an old house then, and is now pulled down. The taste of that day, and much more of those before it, seldom led people to go and live in the country, unless they had an estate to look after. Places are now sadly alike, but those old houses had features and peculiarities of their own.

Between my grandfather's and my father's house was one more singular than either. In the front of one of those great granaries was a yawning, cavernous doorway without any door. You ascended some steps, went through the granary along a boarded floor, and came to a flagged court open to the sky, and there, so completely enclosed that no carriage of any kind could approach it, was a house with a fine hall and staircase, several sitting-rooms, &c., and a garden also looking on the river. But this house had another peculiarity. The coachhouse before mentioned, in which was a carriage, stood near that yawning open passage, and was plainly visible from the front of my father's house, so that it was interesting to see the carriage washed and the horses put to, which was done in public. When the family took a drive the carriage came up to that cavernous doorway, and there they got in. There was nothing strange in this arrangement, so far as I knew or as anyone else said.

The little child, the eldest child of that house, was exactly six months younger than myself, and thus supplies a date for my *second* recollection. I could walk, as I have often been told, when a year old. I remember this baby, who could not walk. She was being held under the arms by her nurse, in order that, as people say, she might feel her feet. She may have been ten or eleven months old. I had no conscience at this time, did not in the least know right from wrong. I walked up to this baby, whose little fat hands were full of beans—horse beans. It is nothing to me how she got them: we were near the coachhouse, but I have no theory to account for the fact. I saw the beans, walked up to her, and deliberately picked them out of her incompetent little fists and appropriated them for myself.

And now as to my first recollection. It can hardly be related without an apology to those who have no such visions in their own keeping. The scene is the dining-room in my grandfather's house, but there is nothing in my recollecting that, for I saw it constantly afterwards. There were two chairs and a little space between. I could stand, and also walk. I stood in the space between the two with one hand on the seat of each. Rather a stout lady sat on one—a lady in a pale silk gown. Someone sat in the other chair, but she is not included in the vision. They talked, but of course I did not understand ordinary language at that time. I do not think I looked up in her face—I only saw it; and her hands are in the vision: she had mittens on, and she was knitting.

This was my grandmother, my father's mother. She was then about sixty years of age, and she died just before my brother's birth, which took place when I was a year and five months old, wanting ten days. She had first an illness of about three weeks, during which she was confined to her bed. I did not know when she died.

After this I remember very well that I used generally to be carried when out of doors, and an early recollection is of being carried to my grandfather's house when it was dark. A kind of servants' hall was lighted up, and I was set on a corner seat, and my outer wraps were taken off. I was then carried into the kitchen, and kissed by those present, men and maids. There the vision ends.

After recollections, when I was nearly four years old, show me that this was probably my father's birthday. There used to be a large dinner party then. I had a lace cap on at the time of the affectionate greeting, but I perfectly remember that I frequently wore this when taken downstairs to see company; and there is not much in this recollection, for I have often been told that my mother let me wear it much later than most children, for I had not much hair, and she thought it becoming. There were little bows of satin ribbon in it, and I wore it till about two years old.

After this my recollections grow more distinct. I began to understand a good deal of what people said—that is, of what they said especially to me—and nearly the last of the remembrances, which I have called visions, belongs to the summer when I was about two years and four months old.

I was in a honeysuckle arbour in the garden, sitting on my mother's knee. She had a white gown on and her pearl necklace. I saw two stars—planets probably—and I suppose I pointed at them and asked her to give one of them to me. I think that is what I said, but do not in the least remember any words, and how the knowledge was conveyed I have not the least idea, but I was let to know by my mother that the stars were not hers, that there was Someone up there to whom they belonged, and who had made them. He was very good, and if we were good He would be pleased with us.

I did not like this at all. Something like awe I suppose made me hide my face in her bosom, lest He should see me; and for some time after this, when we went out walking, and there were great white clouds in the sky, I used to look out in case He might be seen sitting on one of them.

The total want of any knowledge of right and wrong was not altogether wilful then. Certain things were only found out to be delinquencies when punishment followed the doing of them. I remember seeing the dear mamma and a young friend of hers ornamenting some saucers and little vases with tiny flowers made of various-coloured rice-paper. The flowers were cut out leaf by leaf, fastened together with gum, and then stuck on to the vases, which were made of what was called biscuit-china. I used to watch the making of these. They were finished and put on a table in the drawing-room. I saw them—it was a long sofa-table of rosewood. I managed to stand on a little stool to admire more closely, and then by slow degrees I picked every one of the flowers off, with the greatest care and pains, and collected them in a little cup. I had nearly finished this task: so happy I was, so industrious, when my mother and her friend came in. Great were the exclamations! ‘I was a very very naughty, mischievous child!’ I was scolded and punished, and then found out that I had done wrong.

About this time and for some months—perhaps for more than a year after—I had a habit of attributing intelligence to not only all living creatures—the same amount and kind of intelligence that I had myself—but even to stones and manufactured articles. I used to feel how dull it must be for the pebbles in the causeway to be obliged to lie still and only see what was round about. When I walked out with a little basket for putting flowers in I used sometimes to pick up a pebble or two and carry them on to have a change; then at the furthest point of the walk turn them out, not doubting that they would be pleased to have a new view.

This difficulty in attaining to a clear distinction in the understanding between dead matter—I will call it the world—and the youthful spirit observing it, is very much increased by grown-up people. They suggest and foster it. They teach the children to kiss and fondle dolls, and to pat the pictures in a book, or to slap ‘the naughty floor’ when they tumble down and it has struck them.

I remember very vividly the deep respect with which I regarded my nurse, who was a widow. My father and mother I loved—most of the pleasures of early childhood came from them. A bell used to ring when I and the next baby, who could walk by this time, were to go down. Our nurse often expressed herself aggrieved at the acclamation which followed the tinkling of this bell, saying that she was always kind to us, and grumbling while she washed our faces, smoothed our hair, and produced us clean

and smiling to play with the young father and mother before their dinner, which was at the then late and fashionable hour of five. They were very big—all grown-up people were of the same height—and extremely beautiful, as I thought. There was generally someone staying in the house, and the favourite amusement was dancing, while my mother played on the piano and sang. Almost every night, as it seems to me, my father danced with me in his arms, and some visitor with my brother. The song almost always was *What have you for dinner, good Mrs. Bond?* Once, my father having put me down, I entreated for some more dancing, and he pretended to limp, and said he had a bone in his leg. He let me feel how hard the bone was, and I believe this made a real impression. I often thought of it, and thought what a sad thing it was.

✓As to the beauty of my parents, I believe there is no sense of fineness of form in infancy. Beauty means youth, bright colour, or white. My mother to my eyes was beautiful in some of her gowns and not so much so in others. The nurse wore black—she was therefore ugly. Yet beauty has a great deal also to do with affection, for I thought both father and mother, also my grandfather, were certainly more beautiful than other people, and I loved them accordingly. Anyone else? Yes, the footman. He was young, as I suppose, and had beautiful clothes, which is to be beautiful. I was much attached to him. He took delight in carrying me about, showed me the pretty things in his pantry, and gave me valuable articles. One of these was the top of a pine-apple. Pine-apples were not common then—they could only be grown in hothouses. There had been a dinner party. This dear man planted the top of the pine in my own garden, which may have been about six feet square. Some heartsease plants grew in it, but hardly anything else that I remember.

I must have been at the least three years old then, and was utterly devoid of sense as regards the common affairs of life, for I think it was at this time that my little brother and I were sitting on a low bench on the walk before this my garden, when it suddenly began to pelt with rain, and instead of making the least attempt to go indoors, we both burst out crying and wailed most piteously till the nursemaid ran out to us and fetched us in.

Another thing almost as devoid of reason I used to do then. When the tide was high in the river, which ran below our nursery, there used to be when the sun shone a wavering line of light along the wall just about the height of my hand. I thought I could

catch this and keep it still in my hand to see what it was like, and again and again and yet again I tried to be quick enough to secure the wave, instead of which, whatever pains I took, the pattern always came on the outside of my hand, and was never underneath when I cautiously moved it a little to look under. Many days I used to do this, and I remember the tiny brother standing beside me playing at the same game, but of course understanding even less of the matter than I did.

It is a common fancy that children are happiest in one another's companionship. This is a mistake. The younger child is naturally delighted with the elder; but a child about a year and a half old, when the next of the family first appears in the nursery, is for a long time quite alone, immeasurably above and more sage in its own view than that new arrival, and hardly conscious at first of its presence. There can be no communication between them.

I have said that locality had a large share in the fixing of such knowledge as I acquired. To give an instance of what I mean: my mother when I was about three years old began to teach me the alphabet in the breakfast-room of my first home. There were no pictures, but the letters of that alphabet were large capitals. When I think of the alphabet in the abstract, it is in that book, and I am a little child in a white frock and the blue sash of the period. It is the frequent involuntary connection of the word alphabet with this room which makes the room and all in it so well remembered. The ideal alphabet always has been on that round table.

So the word *bookcase* constantly raises an image of the first bookcase, the one in that room. It was large and high, and had glass doors. Among other books there were rows of what I knew afterwards to be the *Edinburgh* and the *Quarterly Review*. When I hear either of these referred to I see them, as a rule, in that bookcase.

Whether I was less or more than five years old is generally known to me still by what I may call the locality in which any knowledge acquired is ideally stored.

Thus we left that house when I was about five years old, but I must have known how to count up to a hundred first, for these numbers, as I used to see them when I said them, appeared to go up and up a kind of ladder which was leaned against my grandfather's house, as I saw it through the window.

Such of Watts's hymns as I was to learn were taught to me in

that house, chiefly in the nursery, and there I first began to feel a distaste for false and imperfect rhymes. If the rhyming word was not right I made it so at the expense of the sense, the ear being much in advance of the reason. It was just the same with rhythm. I much delighted in a song that would 'go right,' as I called it, and the degree of discomfort and disappointment which halting, jumbling cadences and bad rhymes gave me I have not got over to this day.

I think we find it hard to believe how diverse we are from one another, how much culture and education can do for one and how little for the next. We take opinions from others, but not tastes and qualities.

It is very true of many who are not poets that they were born, not made. As for me, I acquired from education a moderate amount of knowledge, but from the earliest dawn of memory I find in myself no new quality or power, only development. I merely grew on, and at last grew up, but took an unusual, indeed an unconscionable, length of time to do it in.

I know that Watts's and other hymns were taught me before I was four years old, because when I repeat them the nursery guard, against which I used to stand, starts into imaginary view still. It was high, up to my chin. I know to this day what pictures there were on the wall on that side of the nursery, and those hymns are inseparable from the guard. I also remember perfectly how very little meaning there was for me in a good many of the words.

✓ Our nurse was a sailor's widow. Her husband had been lost at sea, and she constantly talked in our presence of storms and wrecks, but not much to us I think, for how should we understand her? We did not, I believe, but many of the remembered things she said had an influence on me years after—gave me my first sense of tragedy, and connected it with the sea. From her came also the first sense of inferiority—'*I was only a girl.*' There was a vessel to be launched at high tide in the river; it belonged to my grandfather. I was taken to see the launch from a window, but my father, grandfather, and little brother were on board. 'Why did not I go too? Have a new frock and a purple sash?' 'O! well, because my grandfather wanted to have the boy, and he came and carried him on board himself.' I think I must have been capable of expressing a notion that this was not fair, for I remember not only being found fault with, but being told with some scorn that it never would be fair, because 'such was not the

ways of providence.' I do not quote these words because I expressly remember that they were used on that occasion, but because they were commonly in that nurse's mouth, as explaining her humble and devout opinions, and because I knew from that day forward through her teaching on the occasion that 'I was only a girl.'

Is there such a thing, it has been asked, as sex in the soul? Perhaps not. The body and intellect together have sex. The soul or spirit can but manifest itself in the body, through the intellect, the senses, feelings, and passions. No wonder then that the boy, the superior creature, is born a boy and makes this manifest from the dawn of reason. But the infant woman often merely stands aside, not caring for the things which delight him, or afraid of them.

My grandfather used to take a ride every fine day on a quiet, peaceable horse, an old hunter. His name was Griffin. Griffin was beloved by my little brother, who as soon as he could speak a few words used to demand that he should be taken when we came home from our walk to see Griffin in his stable. He was pleased if they set him on his back while he was eating his corn. Sometimes Griffin had his saddle on; then my brother, being carefully held on, was allowed to ride him through the yard and round to the front door. Occasionally I was set on behind him. I knew this was an honour, but was always terribly afraid.

It was before this time that I began to speculate. I must have come on a good way, for I went through a world of cogitation as to whether it was really true that anything had been and lived before I was there to see it. For a long time I had not thought about this, taking for granted, as I suppose, that I was the first and the all. Then for some time I could not and would not believe what people said. Almost every day when we went out for our walk this puzzled me. I could think there might have been some day when I was very little—as small as the most tiny pebble on the road—but not to have been at all was so very hard to believe. No puzzle is so common as this even to grown-up people in the present day, as concerning external things. As concerning oneself, each soon gives it up. The evidence is so overwhelming. My mother talked of the time when she was a little girl. I was not there to look at her while she played about. I was not there. I was not anywhere.

I am sure I never attempted to argue this point, but I thought of it continually. All things that I knew of passed in review.

The church, the river, the ships, the furniture—had all been there before I came? I scorned the thought for awhile, and at length gave way. I distinctly know that this was an exercise of infantine reason. I considered that what everybody said must be true, and with occasional fits of scepticism succumbed to this astonishing fact.

I was about four years old at this time, and sometimes, without any special cause, a strange ecstasy of wonder and delight used to come over me. Sometimes it was a beautiful toy or flower that caused it, sometimes a new gown of my mother's or the music that she used to play to us. This last used to make me cry for joy occasionally.

I am sure the joy in colour and anything that I thought splendid was quite as strong in me, if seen in a draper's window or the coloured vases in a chemist's shop, as in a sunset or a convolvulus.

I think I never admired anything more than a ruby-coloured satin pelisse that my mother had. She wore a hat or bonnet of the same colour with it. I loved to see her walk about in this costume. I even remember that the name of the milliner who made it was Mrs. Routledge.

Wonder and admiration about this time grew in my infant mind. I recollect my delight in poring over Watts's cradle song, 'Hush, my dear, lie still and slumber.'

There are a good many sweet and musical lines in it, and I liked the cadence, then no doubt met with for the first time. No doubt the words were explained to me, for I think I understood them. This was poetry. I knew even then what poetry was, though I had never heard its name, and I had a great delight—I should have called it poetic delight if I had known the words—in various noises and sights and scents.

When the tide came up in the river there were certain wooden wharves between it and the granaries. We could walk on them and the sound of our steps and of the water washing against the piles on which they were built caused me a kind of ecstasy, especially when the sun shone and the water could be seen glittering through the cracks in them.

Then there was a shipyard not far off, we could hear the shipwrights' hammers, as one stood outside the hull of a half-finished vessel, and struck the nail while his fellow clenched it within. To hear that was bliss.

I had now attained to the age of five years and a few weeks,

and had my first experience of pain, not having had so much as one day's illness in my life. With this experience the true period of infancy came to an end.

I was dancing along a dark passage when the housemaid ran up against me. She was about to light the drawing-room fire, had a pan of red coals, and one of them was thrown into the bosom of my frock.

In the effort to get it out I worked it round with my thumb and made the burn larger. There is no need to go over the well-remembered scene, to describe the terror in the house, my mother's tears, my cries. It is all vividly in my mind; and then the night after: a bed had been made up for me in my parents' room, for my mother could not bear me out of her presence. I was then awake in the night as I suppose for the very first time, and watched the rushlight with wonder. The pain I do not remember, only my tears and wailings in consequence of it, and what was done to amuse me. The nurseries of our little friends contributed their toys and picture-books. I was made much of, and for some little time, both lessons and discipline came to an end.

There is a perfectly amazing difference to my thought between the time before and after that accident. When I got well we moved into another home. That also made a great change.

We considered the change delightful, partly, perhaps, because our parents never said a word to the contrary, and were so far as we perceived just as cheerful as ever. It was from a large house on the outskirts of the town, a good many servants, and some luxuries, to a small house in the country, few servants, a very large garden and a good deal of liberty to run about in it, investigate the nests, tame and feed birds, study fields, flowers, and constantly find out more and more about this most remarkable world.

That there were few servants was the chief advantage, because we had so much more of the company of our parents. Perhaps the difference in point of luxury ought to have been noticed by an intelligent child, but for a long time I knew nothing about it, and when I did, cared not at all. Everything was so interesting. But infancy was now over. It came to an end almost in a day: and everything in it as I look back belongs as it were to another world, another age of the world, another dispensation.

The wonderful unconsciousness of the body which characterised it was gone. There was such a thing as pain, and shortly there

was such a thing as cold, which I do not remember to have felt before.

I am not concerned here with anything beyond infancy. Unless I may say that if there was anything in me peculiar, education tended to soften it down; wonder and imagination, as well as all the strange new speculations natural to me, receded in some degree, and were kept in abeyance, before the inroads of learning. The tiresome pothooks, arithmetic, the troubles of French verbs, &c., were a disadvantage for some time to the more truly interesting things I investigated of my own accord, or knew without being taught.

No new faculties came to me; nothing I may be supposed to have earned; it was all a gift, and it gradually came to light.

People must be educated, and I certainly was by no means over-educated; but I think regular teaching in some degree destroys originality. I was meant to be more original than the creature I afterwards became.

To be taught the truths of our holy religion is a great blessing, and to be taught such elementary things as the 'three R's' is absolutely necessary. Perhaps some knowledge of history and a fair acquaintance with the French language must be added as necessary for ALL; but I find it possible to doubt whether much more is UNIVERSALLY desirable.

Every child that is truly intelligent and original must educate itself, and does, far faster than the governess can go. Such children, if they are not overtaxed with lessons, collect, observe, and appropriate everything they read or hear on the subjects for which they have a natural bent. Everything they want may truly be said to *come* to them. They are critical and fastidious even from early childhood on such points, and very often are far in advance of their teachers.

'Bring you up, did I?' was said in joke to one who had been such a child. 'There was no occasion; it was impossible to keep you down.'

Such children cannot be kept out of their inheritance, and it does not much matter what they are taught, always provided that their education does not begin when they are too young. But I should like to conclude, if I may, with a word in the interest of such infancy as does not show any strong bent or eager craving for knowledge of any kind, any keen insight, any poetic vision.

It belongs to such as are delicate, weak, idle, a little dull, perhaps almost stupid.

These are not so well off as average children, to begin with, and have never known either the ecstatic joy, wonder, or fear, of such as are highly endowed.

Should they be more sedulously taught, more anxiously brought on, more industriously helped than these?

I think not; but, in the first place, their education should begin a good deal later, and, in the next, it should be moderate, and be made easy even for them.

It is, I believe, the backward infants to whom it does harm to be pressed on.

They would have better health and better spirits in after-life if they were at first a good deal let alone. They should be gently encouraged till they have attained to such knowledge as is absolutely necessary, and then with that they would probably retain such an amount of freshness and such originality as they were endowed with at first.

JEAN INGELOW.

Epicurus Wynn.

CHAPTER I.

OUTSIDE it had grown quite dark, except for a tender light above the hilltops in the west; the clear sky and the soft wind soothed one with the promise of coming summer; but what mattered May to those inside the Royal Theatre of Varieties? It was a large bare room, filled with the reek of bad tobacco and a pervading sensation of stale beer; a single gallery ran round, the centre of which was cushioned and supposed to be 'select,' but the popular parts of the house were the sides and the body down below. There they took things easily, smoked much thick twist, exchanged salutations with their friends aloft, and when pleased stamped tumultuously on the floor and whistled with their fingers in an ear-piercing manner. But the dreariness of the performance itself was beyond description; there was nothing that pretended to music, the humour had not reached beyond the knockabout stage; it was not even indecent; simply dull—ponderously and profoundly dull. A young woman, dressed in a Grenadier's uniform, as far at least as was consistent with the unities of music-hall costume, was singing a patriotic war-ditty, with much martial strutting about the stage, and the audience was noisily assisting at the chorus, which combined 'England's right' and 'British might' in a novel and pleasing fashion. It was the last verse, with the necessary sentiment:—

And now the last night watch is set,
But, ere he goes to sleep,
Our gallant boy breathes one deep prayer
For those across the deep:
'Oh, God of All! my wife and child
Safe in Thy guidance keep!'

Even the first violin, a stolid young man who had been playing there for some time, was struck by the incongruity of this verse

with its surroundings. He did not call it blasphemy, because he was not in the habit of analysing his feelings, but he was touched by a sense of something wrong. However, any further thoughts about the matter were strangely interrupted. The applause had barely died away when a loud, rough voice shouted :

‘Whoso has a soul to be saved, let him flee from the wrath to come!’

Everyone turned at once, and saw by one of the side entrances a little knot of people, all wearing the well-known dress of the Salvation Army, and clustered round a dark, stern-looking young man, who had just spoken. As the audience waited a moment in silent surprise, a girl sprang upon one of the benches and began, in a clear, thrilling voice :

‘Oh, my brothers! has not Christ died for you, and does He not say—Knock?’

So far she was heard, for the band had stopped and the people had not realised the situation, but everything else was drowned in the tumult of whistling, shouting, and yelling that now arose. The little group struck up a hymn, set in fact to one of the tunes sung there nightly; but this was a signal for a rush of the crowd over the seats at them, while someone in the gallery threw an empty beer-bottle at the girl who was still standing on the bench. At this moment, too, the gas was turned down, but not before the violin had seen the bottle on its way. It was too much for him; the last verse of the song had left him with a feeling of shame, that had been deepened by the girl’s words, and now he leapt over the barrier and dashed towards the struggling crowd, which was being swept in his direction. He caught her just as she was being borne down in the rush, and before he well knew what was happening was carried out with the rest into the street.

Once outside, the cool air and the darkness quieted everyone, and the lights going up again the audience returned to the performance, but the musician was left standing with the reunited Salvationists, few of whom were without marks of the conflict. The young man who seemed to be their leader took him by the hand.

‘Welcome, in the name of the Lord! One soul at least we have saved from hell! Turn not back from the good work, for woe unto him that putteth his hand to the plough!’

He did not exactly know what to reply to this, when the girl, whom he still supported, turned to him and said :

'Tha's saved my life to-night, save thy own soul! Come with us, and go not again into that house of wrath!'

'Nay, I saved no life. They'd noan ha' hurt thee. I doubt I shall play there any more, but I mun go back for my fiddle.'

He resisted alike their entreaties and their warnings, saying that 'prayer meetings were noan in his line,' and returned to take his place again in the orchestra, while the little army moved across the market-place, damped somewhat by their defeat, but triumphant in the feeling of having suffered for their Master. Epicurus Wynn played out the rest of the performance, but with growing disgust, for the remembrance of the girl standing there seemed to have opened his eyes for the first time, and to cast a pure light around that showed the whole place unclean.

His was a quiet nature, not very observant nor readily affected by externals, and he had played there night after night, heedless of the vice and vulgarity, not indeed thinking of it, except as an inevitable accompaniment of his daily work. But this was henceforth impossible, and when the evening's entertainment was over he went behind and told the manager that he was not coming any more. The manager was already in no amiable mood; he had been a good deal put out by the disturbance, for the artiste whose song had been interrupted being a bit of a star, had required coaxing before she would consent to reappear, so that the defalcation of his best musician was the last straw, and his wrath boiled over. When he at last found words he asked:

'Are you turned Salvationist too, or what the —— is up to-night?'

'No, I'm noan turned Salvationist, but I'm coming no more. That's all!'

'Go, and be —— to you! But remember you get no wage this week!' And here he again grew inarticulate.

'Nobody axed thee for any wage, so tha'd better keep a quiet tongue i' thy head,' and Epicurus Wynn put his violin under his arm and left the place for good.

As he strode down the long street to the river and climbed the hill on the other side his mind soon recovered its wonted placidity, which had been somewhat ruffled by his parting with the manager, but he could not so easily put away the thought of the girl, as she stood pleading courageously with the brutal crowd of the music hall. He half-smiled at the madness of an attempt to convert the frequenters of such a place, but he felt ashamed

and somewhat resentful that it should have needed her to show him the degradation of it all.

Epicurus Wynn had been brought up after rather a curious fashion, entirely by his father, who in his youth had been notorious for his Radicalism and his infidelity, one of the most marked acts of which was the christening of his only son Epicurus, in direct defiance of all the respectable opinion of the place. When his wife died, which happened when Eppy was still a baby, Jesse Wynn declared his intention of managing for himself, and having no more women about the place. So he did, and despite the incredulous scoffs of the neighbouring housewives no cottage was so neat and clean as his; his arrangements were the wonder and envy of his friends, and afforded them a constant text for the comfortable doctrine of how much better a man could do these things when he really set himself to it.

Epicurus had flourished well under the system, and had grown up a big, healthy lad, somewhat dreamy and old-fashioned, rather slow of apprehension, but tenacious of all impressions, and passionately sensitive to certain kinds of beauty, especially music. He had not consorted much with lads of his own age, but rambled about the country with his father, who had abandoned politics for botany, and become an indefatigable collector.

Meanwhile Chadgate had increased from a little village of a hundred houses or so to a great cotton-spinning centre, and Jesse Wynn's old pugnacity had died away a good deal with the general improvement in the condition of the working classes. He still occasionally spent his Sunday mornings listening to the addresses at the Secularists' Hall, and had not failed to impress his own ideas about religion on the boy; but since they had grown up round Eppy, they had lost the bitterness which comes from opposition, and were no longer aggressive, but part of his ordinary habit of mind.

When he got home, Eppy found three or four other working-men naturalists with his father; the microscope was set up on the table, and they had been discussing the points of a rare moss one of them had just found, when the arrival of a younger man, hot from a Radical meeting, had turned the conversation from science to politics. He had been treating them to a faded version of the evening's speeches, and Jesse, in disgust, had at last broken out:

'I'm sick o' hearing yo young folks talk, talk, talk, about liberty and injustice, and t' wickedness o' t' Tories. Yo should

ha' bin a young mon when I were, and then yo'd a had summat to feight about. T' working mon nowadays has gotten better wage, and eddication, and his union, and there's ten fools now for one when I're a lad. H'd better mend hissel' and shut up callin' t' aristocracy. Oh! I'm talking, tha thinks, but I did my share i' Chartist times, and I'm ready to do it again when it's wanted. Tha says I've deserted t' cause, but wait till there's summat worth feighting for, and Jesse Wynn 'll be thereabouts.'

There was a general hum of assent from the others, who had resented the introduction of politics, and the discomfited orator beat a retreat when Eppy entered.

'Tha'rt late, lad!' said his father.

'Aye, but it's t' last time. I've chucked t' theatre from to-neet.'

'Hast gotten t' bag?' asked one of the others.

'Nay, there were no sacking about it. I just telled Williams I'd had enough.'

'Well, I'm reet glad, Eppy,' said his father. 'I've said nowt, but I ne'er cared for it. I'm noan agen play-acting and music, but they're an illfavourt lot as goes yon. And tha doesna want t' brass, for th'art noan married, and tha collects nowt.'

The rest of the company assented with a sigh, as they thought of the books they should like, and the cases they could buy if they only had the money.

'I've done wi' it now, ony road,' responded Eppy, and passed into the back kitchen to look for a little supper. By the time he had finished the others had all dropped off, and father and son, after a little more talk about what had happened at the theatre, said good-night and went their ways to bed.

CHAPTER II.

It was half-past twelve; the mills of Chadgate had just loosed; and the air was filled with the clatter of iron-bound clogs over the pavement, as an eager tide of shawled women and men, grimy with oil and cotton fluff, set down the long street to the river. Among them was Epicurus Wynn, large-framed and vigorous. He strode along by himself with his usual dreamy and abstracted look; but before he reached the bridge he was

arrested by a hand on his arm, and turning, saw that it was the girl he had dragged out of the music hall on the previous evening. In the daylight he could form a clearer idea of her. She was tall and slight, somewhat pale and worn-looking: but you forgot to ask whether she was pretty in the presence of the intense and spiritual life that lit up her face. She was dressed like any other mill girl, in a grey shawl that covered the head and fastened under the chin, and she spoke with a directness you would not have expected from her delicate and even shrinking appearance, but which was far removed from the audacity of her class.

‘What’s thy name, young man? I want to pray for thee.’

‘I doubt it’ll be ony use, but I’m called Epicurus Wynn.’

‘Epicurus?’

‘Aye. It were my feyther’s doing. He’s a Secularist and had me christened after an owd philosopher, as he’re fond on.’

‘He’ll suffer for it some day. And art tha a Secularist?’

‘Aye. I go wi’ my feyther. I reckon tha’ll do no good praying for me.’

‘Tha knows nowt about that. Eh, lad! come to some of our meetings! Tha’s got a soul to be saved whether tha likes it or not. Come and hear the Lord’s word! Has tha ever tried to live wi’ Christ, and larn what He can give thee?’

She spoke roughly enough, but there was something in the exaltation of her voice that thrilled strange fibres in Eppy. He had been touched the night before, and now he turned things over a little in his mind and slowly answered, ‘Th’art reet enough there, lass. I’ve ne’er tried religion. I’ll come and hear what you’ve got to say. But I tell thee fairly, I’m a Secularist, and make nowt o’ t’ Bible. I’ve tow’d thee my name—what’s thine?’

‘Norah Kerby,’ she answered, looking him almost defiantly in the face. ‘Michael Kerby’s my father.’

‘Eh, lass; but tha’s a hard time of it, I reckon!’

Michael Kerby was a notorious character in Chadgate, a prize fighter in his youth; he was now a kind of dog and pigeon fancier, and having worn one wife to death, was married again to a woman who was his master, and in her own way as evil as himself.

‘He has given me strength for it,’ said Norah. ‘The troubles of this world are little things if they bring you to Him.’

‘Well, I must be going,’ he said now, for their ways parted; ‘but I’ll come to-neet.’

So that evening when he had finished his tea and washed himself, Eppy went off to the Salvation Army barracks, a barn-like wooden structure, not far from his old haunt, and which, indeed, had been a theatre itself till the growing prosperity of Chadgate had demanded a larger building. When he entered, it was nearly filled with a curiously mixed crowd. Round the door was a group of idle young men and girls who had come to scoff, and who rushed out at intervals with an explosion of laughs and shouts. Young people, too, mainly predominated on the bare benches, the boys sheepish, the girls very wakeful, with a set look on their faces that was meant to indicate devotion and enthusiasm. Here and there was a comfortable-looking dame, who liked her religion strong; but there was also a fair leaven of middle-aged folks, weary-eyed and worn, who were faithfully and earnestly striving to tread the narrow way. At the further end of the room was a small platform, with a bare handrail at the edge, and from this elevation a young man, whom Eppy knew a little, was preaching with a fierce intensity, that lost its effect from its unvarying dead-weight of emphasis. Eppy remembered him now as the leader of the little band of Salvationists in the music hall, and marvelled much, for he had not heard of this last stage in his strange career. George Howarth's boyhood had been embittered by a slight lameness, which cut him off from the sports and companionship of other boys of his age. His strong nature had turned in upon itself, and though he had been forced to leave school for the mill at a very early age, he had toiled at night schools and evening classes, till he had at last obtained a place as usher in a private school in London. But he very soon found the life intolerable; the boys mocked his accent, the other masters alternately sneered at him and patronised him, which he resented still more, and finally, after one outburst of passionate temper, he was dismissed without any prospect, or, indeed, desire, of another such situation. He came back to Chadgate hopeless, and resumed his work at the mill, a soured man, who saw nothing but injustice in the world, everywhere the wicked man flourishing, and he himself condemned to a life he had once risen above. Almost at once he sank into gloomy dissipation, from which he had been rescued by the Salvation Army, to throw the whole bitter strength of his nature into their religion, with its hard dogmas and fierce anticipations of a future retribution.

Eppy's attention wandered; he found little in the discourse that appealed to him in any way; and he was soon lost in remembrances

of other very different scenes—concerts and plays he had enjoyed in that room in old days. But his interest was fixed when Norah Kerby came on to the platform to speak. She advanced to the railing without a trace of self-consciousness, her bonnet hung from her arm, so showing a loosely coiled mass of black hair, which only increased the fragility of her appearance. Entirely absorbed in her message, she at once began to speak—

“Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden.”

We need hardly continue; it was not her words, it was the far-away look in her great eyes which seemed to fill with a vision not granted to the rest, the appealing conviction in her voice, that thrilled Eppy like a strain of profoundest melody, and made him think that after all there might be something in religion to which his father was blind, as he was deaf to the music, where he himself found his keenest delight. And when at the close she asked that the peace of God and the blessing of Christ might descend on one soul who had come among them that night, and entreated their prayers for the brother who was still outside the fold, he was touched by a sense of an all-embracing love that he had never known before, for sincere and deep as was the affection between his father and himself, it was stoically unemotional, and knew no tendernesses of word or deed. As they walked home together, he promised Norah to come again, and after awhile became a regular frequenter of the meetings. But he grew no nearer to getting religion; he would be carried away by the spell of Norah's preaching, but when that was over, his placid temperament, cautious from early training, found no satisfaction in the turgid doctrines of the army. What he did come for was Norah herself, and he went about with her till it was generally said that ‘Eppy Wynn and yon Salvation lass o’ Kerby’s were keeping company.’

They talked little of love or the future, but a very tender understanding was growing up between them, only marred by Norah's anxiety that Eppy should enrol himself in their ranks and his reluctance to satisfy her by any such pious fiction. However, it seemed such a little thing compared with her love, that he was drifting in that direction, when he was arrested by his father. They had just been taking tea together, and Eppy was getting ready to go out, when his father said:

‘Th’art going a good deal to them meetings nowadays. Art bound to turn Salvationist?’

‘Nay, I can’t say as I am.’

'It's yon lass o' Kerby's, then, th'art after?'

'Aye. I were going to tell thee when I got a quiet chance. We've made it up wi' one another.'

'I've heard tell o' what were going on. I could ha' wished she coom of a better stock, but a man mun do for hissel' i' these things. She seems a likely lass for aught I know.'

'I'll be bringing her to see thee some day.'

'Aye, do. Mebbe she'll larn as an owd Secularist isn't t' devvil hissel'. But what art tha boun' to do. T' Army 'll noan let yon go in a hurry, and thee a Secularist. Art tha going to let 'em convert thee?'

'I've noan thowt much about it. Mebbe I shall; it'll noan matter much t' once we're wed.'

'Tha'll noan be Jesse Wynn's lad if tha does. Tha'll be telling a downright lee, and that isn't t' road wi' Secularists, and I doubt wi' Salvationists either. If tha does, tha'll ha' trouble to the end o' thy days, aye, and deserve it too. Thee be straight wi' thyself and t' lass too, and t' Salvation Army can go where it likes, but tha'll be o reet.'

'Well, I reckon there's summat i' what tha says; I'll be thinking about it.'

As Eppy walked off he considered his position, and it became abundantly clear to him that he must tell no lies about his beliefs, whatever trouble and pain might ensue.

CHAPTER III.

It was well that Eppy had been roused by his father's questionings, for that night a decision was forced upon him, and without any faltering he was able to take the course approved by his better judgment. For some time George Howarth had been painfully watching the companionship of Norah and Eppy; he had never explicitly told himself that he loved her, but he had always considered there was a peculiar tie between Norah and himself, as beings set apart from the rest by their sorrows, who alike sought in religion refuge from the evil of the world. And was this divine soul, who seemed to him little lower than one of the angels, was she to be entrusted to an open scoffer, a blind and self-satisfied denier of God? With his whole strength he would combat this last daring scheme of the devil's, and preserve so precious a being

for Christ's work upon earth. He had little hope somehow of success, still less did he expect to gain anything for himself; the world had come to seem a strife mostly given over to the Evil One, where the reward was not promised for victory, but for battle at all. His early forebodings met with little response from the others, who only saw in Eppy a likely addition to the flock; while some warnings he had ventured to address to Norah herself had been treated with clear-sighted indignation that laid bare to him his jealousy. But Eppy had been coming regularly to their meetings for a couple of months, and was still unwilling to profess himself a convert, indeed, had several times declined to join them when directly invited, so that Howarth found little difficulty in persuading the other officials that he should be forced publicly to decide for or against them. They could not do without Norah, for to her preaching they owed much of their success, but they could not imagine Eppy leaving her, and they tasted in anticipation the triumph that would be theirs, when the son of that notorious atheist Jesse Wynn, should openly join them. The little community had a kind of private meeting every Friday, to discuss their personal affairs; that evening it had been whispered about that Eppy Wynn was to be compelled to declare himself, so that when the ordinary business was over everyone waited in their seats. There was a slight pause of silent expectation and then one of the older members rose to speak, for Howarth had thought it better that he himself should appear in the matter as little as possible. He was a fluent windbag of a man, who was somewhat jealous of the success of Norah's preaching, and would not at heart have been sorry to see her go.

'It has fallen upon me as spokesman for the officers of the Salvation Army here stationed at Chadgate to perform a disagreeable duty. But we have all something of that sort to do, and it is the Lord's will that we should not go about to escape it. "See that ye refuse not him who speaketh." Folks are saying, Epicurus Wynn, as you are keeping company wi' Norah Kerby, that's an officer i' this Army and given up to carrying the banner of the Lord; while from all as we hear you are no better than one of the lost, an atheist and a freethinker. Now, in the Army o' the Lord there's no place for facing both ways, will tha come and wash in His blood and be saved, or will tha go forth into the outer darkness. Norah Kerby mun ha' nowt to do wi' Secularists and that sort, so tha mun either join us or go.'

Norah started up indignantly: 'Thee mind thy own business,

Thomas Fletcher, and meddle noan wi' other folks. As long as I do my work right for t' Army, what's tha got to do wi' me and Epicurus Wynn?' Eppy too, said, 'I come here and listen to your preaching, I live a quiet life and say nowt agen yo. Thee bother noan.' A little excited talking and whispering had begun, for opinions were divided, but it settled down again to intense stillness, when Howarth reluctantly got up, finding that his interference was necessary, so much had Fletcher created sympathy with the lovers. As he walked down the platform he caught a glance of swift indignation from Norah, but it only inspired him to his task with a sad dignity, that in his Master's cause he should be misinterpreted by her for whom he was most earnestly striving.

'Brothers and sisters! Captain Fletcher has not spoken perhaps the wisest words, but it is a difficult matter for us all to-night, and we must bear with one another. Norah Kerby—you are one of the Lord's chosen servants, whom He has blessed abundantly with the means of salvation, will you now turn back from the work? Remember that in His hands you have been an instrument for leading many into the right way, will you forsake Him now to follow after vain desires? Epicurus Wynn! Come in unto us and we will rejoice over you; accept Christ, and great shall be your reward both here and hereafter! Come and save your soul, aye, and hers too! The choice lies before you, one or the other, for he that is not with us is against us!'

He spoke slowly and painfully, with an obvious struggle that lent a weighty earnestness to all his words, so that everyone followed breathlessly and waited the issue in awe-struck silence. To some devouter natures there, the stillness seemed only man's hush, while the great adversaries fought out their ancient battle over a soul that was present with them, and in all sincerity they cast their unspoken prayers into the scale. Norah sat with her face buried in her hands; long before she had learnt the bitter lesson that in renunciation of self lay the only true peace; must she then deny herself this new joy that had clothed her life with such passionate beauty; her heart revolted from the cruelty of it all, but the still voice seemed to plead within, 'Deny all and follow me!'

At last Eppy rose—'Tha's asked me a straight question, George Howarth, and tha shall have a straight answer. I'd a been fain to come here and listen to what you have to say, but I cannot be a joined member. I'll tell you all fairly, I make little more o' religion now than t' first time I came. And if I mun go,

I mun go. But I's' ne'er give up Norah Kerby for any Salvation Army! Good neet, friends!' and he stolidly marched down the hall.

His action relieved the tension and an instant clamour arose; a few calling on him to remain, but some were already denouncing him, and the general feeling was strong against him. He reached the door and turned once more to look at Norah, when she sprang up—'You've turned him out and I'm going too! His ways shall be my ways.'

Before anyone could attempt to withstand her, she had passed through them all and joined him. Out into the night they went together, alone and content.

CHAPTER IV.

THE next day was Saturday, and work was over at noon, so Eppy went off as soon as he could to take Norah for a walk. She met him at the corner of the street where she lived, timidly happy, with a truant feeling of snatching a forbidden joy, for her Saturday afternoons had hitherto been spent with the Salvation Army. Eppy knew well what a sacrifice she had made for him, and strove hard to so wrap her round with tenderness that she should forget her loss. He was never demonstrative, but there was a placid light of love in his looks, a pleased watchfulness in little things, that placed her in a charmed atmosphere of affection, as sweet as it was unwonted to Norah. They climbed the long road behind the town, and wandered away among the solitary moors; great sweeps of brown grass and heather, broken by green patches of rushes, luxuriating round some bright little pool of water. But that day all the desolation was lost in the sunshine, and as they walked on and on, the wide spaces and the stillness only drew them more closely together and enfolded them more completely in the presence of each other's love. They paused at last, and sat down where the crest of the hill broke into weather-beaten crags. The broad plain of Lancashire lay before them, but towns and factories were lost in the golden afternoon haze, only pierced here and there by the gleam of a distant sheet of water.

For some time they were silent; then Eppy began to sing old Northcountry ballads with his full bass voice. Tenderly he dwelt on the airs that he knew so well, till the music and the love and the quiet afternoon seemed all fused in one passionate feeling. It

loosened all Norah's pent-up emotions, her soul went longing through the misty distances before her, till the intense delight turned to tears, and she clung to him sobbing—

'Oh! Eppy, Eppy! I'm too happy! I'm sore afraid I'm setting too much on myself. It can't last!'

He comforted her tenderly. 'Eh, lass! Th'art fretting thyself' over much. Tha's had a weary life so far, but we'll mend all that. If thy God made us, He made the happiness for us too. As long as we love one another we need trouble noan about aught else.' And he kissed her and soothed her till she was quiet again. After awhile he got out the basket they had brought, and they had their little meal together with smiles and contentment. Then they walked on again, and got back to Chadgate in the dusk, Eppy serene and confident in the future, and she, too, trusting wholly in him, and putting away her vague fears of the transience of all earthly joys. On Sunday, Eppy went for her early in the morning; they had another walk together, and came back to have their dinner and spend the rest of the day with his father. Eppy had been a little troubled about this meeting between Norah and his father, but his fears were set at rest once he saw them together, for they were both too genuine and too human to care much about differences of opinion, and Jesse Wynn's heart warmed to the fragile girl who had suffered so much and striven so nobly, and who had now given up for his son's sake all that had been most precious in her life. And if Eppy had loved his father before, his affection took a warmer turn as he watched the old man tenderly busying himself about Norah, and waiting upon her with a grave politeness, that he learned from the sincerity of his own well-meaning. Norah was very soon at home, and insisted on helping them with their housework, gently rallying them on their man's contrivances, and so identifying herself with the place that Eppy's heart went out to the day when she should be established there for good. He played his violin and sang for them; his father brought out the choicest treasures of his collection, and in the evening was moved to tell them something of Eppy's mother, she whom he had loved so well and lost so early, who had long since left him but a memory that still summed up the best he had known upon earth. Thus the evening wore away in quiet happiness, so that Norah's wayworn spirit found for once a peaceful haven of rest. She forgot the troubles that were past, forgot her vague mistrust of the future, forgot her painful vision of the path of sorrows, in the encircling sweetness of the present.

CHAPTER V.

NORAH awoke the next morning in a dull and heavy mood, the inevitable reaction of her emotional nature from the happiness of the night before. The world seemed very grey and cold as she went off to the mill, and there she was unable to forget herself in her work, but only grew more and more oppressed by the weary monotony of the labour and the noise and clatter around her. And when on her way back at noon she did not find Eppy at his usual corner, waiting to walk the rest of the way with her, the tears almost came with the sudden forlorn feeling that rushed on her. At home things bore heavily on her burdened spirit. Their dinner was seldom anything else than a scene of squalid discomfort, and that morning Michael Kerby had been drinking, and was sullenly quarrelling with his wife, who had managed with difficulty to extricate him from the public-house. In the midst of it all, the door opened, and a small and grimy youth pushed his head in, and enquired if Norah Kerby lived there. Norah rose and went to the door, and received from him a soiled little note.

‘It’s fro’ Eppicurius Wynn, as works at Langley’s.’

She opened it eagerly, not without some bitter remarks from her stepmother, and read with dismay:—

‘I’ve had to go away sudden this morning to Birmingham with some machinery. It’s a job as none of t’ others can tackle, and Langley said as there were nobbut me for it and I mun go. I’m fair sad at heart to leave thee just now, but keep up, lass, and if tha wants ought just go up to my father’s. I’ve telled him to keep an eye on thee, and he’ll be looking thee up afore long. I reckon I’ll be back by Saturday, but I’ll be sending thee my address to-night, so as tha can write and let us know how th’art getting on.

‘Thy loving

‘EPPY.’

It was almost too much, and but for the presence of the others Norah could not have restrained her tears. As it was she sat silent, and gave herself up entirely to the bitter heartache of loneliness that had taken possession of her. She went through her afternoon’s work in a dazed, mechanical way, and came home again with nothing else to do than brood over her trouble, for she had no longer the Army to go to, and there was no Eppy to take her away and comfort her, so she sat alone and desolate in the

house, weaving sorrow-laden dreams of the future. She tried to read but to no purpose. Her only books were the Bible and a few religious works, and for the first time she could find no comfort in them: she seemed to have put away these things for Eppy's love—they spoke only of renunciation and the vanity of all earthly desires. At last, when it was getting late, Mrs. Kerby returned, dragging in her husband, who by this time had drunk himself into a besotted condition, that was oblivious of all things. She herself had been drinking, and was rating him furiously for his behaviour, but as he sprawled on the settle, neither caring nor hearing what she said, her temper took another turn, and, folding her arms, she began to rock furiously in her chair, and bemoan herself of her husband and everything connected with her. The rapid rocking, the incessant moaning flow of reproaches, soon became an intolerable torture to Norah's sensitive mood, so that at last she rose, and laying her hand gently on her stepmother's shoulder, asked if she could do anything for her. This changed the current of Mrs. Kerby's wrath: she had at last something to deal with that was capable of feeling: she struck Norah fiercely in the face, and started up with a torrent of abuse and foul language. Norah shrank shuddering into a corner, while her stepmother poured out her accumulated hatred for the girl, whose quiet ways had long been a silent reproach to the rest of the household. At last the infuriated woman, worked up to a pitch of madness by the effects of drink and passion, rushed again at the unoffending girl, and drove her with blows and execrations from the house. None of the neighbours were aroused—quarrels were only too frequent at the Kerby's to be worth attending to—and Norah found herself alone in the street without a home for the night. It was getting dark too, and the chill wind was just turning to rain, but it was with a sense of relief, almost of gladness, that she turned away, and sped through the deserted streets, hatless and shawless as she was, to Jesse Wynn's. There she was confident of finding both shelter and comfort, so that her heart turned almost sick with dismay when she found the house all dark and empty. She tried the door, but it was locked. She knocked again and again, till it was clear that no one was within. The only thing to do was to wait about till he returned. But the weary minutes seemed interminable: would he never come back? Sometimes she crouched into the doorway for shelter, sometimes she wandered up and down the dark street to get warm, beaten by the wind and the rain, but hardly heeding it in the desolate

feeling of being utterly forsaken that had crept over her. For Jesse Wynn had not thought that Norah would need him so soon, and had gone off for a crack with an old collector friend, where he was staying later and later, little dreaming that the occasion had come which both he and Eppy had dreaded. At last twelve o'clock struck, and as each note came floating on the wind the very bitterness of despair settled down on Norah: she gave up all hopes of his return, and tried to think what was left for her to do. She remembered two old sisters, members of the Salvation Army, who she knew would take her in for the love they had always borne her. Slowly and sadly she turned away, for to leave that house seemed like parting with Eppy and his love, and dragged wearily across the town to her friends, almost too numbed and helpless to be able to arouse them. They forgot their surprise at her miserable condition in their sorrow and pity, and would not let her talk, but comforted her and made much of her, and after awhile, when she had managed to eat something and grow a little warmer, they got her to bed. The last thing one of them said was—

‘Don’t fret, lass! Tha mun take it all as sent from the Lord to lead thee back to Him.’

Norah was too exhausted to sleep, but tossed wearily through the long night, turning over the terrible question as to whether or not the words that she had last heard were true. Had she not been following the imaginings of her own heart and forsaken the Lord, and had He not sent this trouble upon her in very kindness, to lead her back into the right way? The great temptation had come to her as to many another, and she had now to decide, not as before on the passionate impulse of the moment, but during the solemn hours that remained before the day, whether she would cling to her own desires or leave all and follow Him. She remembered the young man with great possessions who turned away exceeding sorrowful; but what was his sorrow to her’s, who was bidden to cast away, not riches, but love? So the night wore away in the conflict, but the conviction ever deepened that she must practise the lesson she had been learning her whole life through: in self-renunciation alone lay peace—there alone could she find firm ground amidst the confused whirl of feelings that beset her. So when one of the sisters came to see her in the grey dawning, she said—

‘I have given it all up, and I’m coming back to you;’ and then, utterly worn out, fell into a heavy, dreamless sleep.

When she awoke she was too worn and bruised, both in body and spirit, to do anything but lie there in languor, touchingly grateful for every little attention that was paid her. The sisters—two simple and devout women, who had grown to regard Norah almost as a prophetess come on earth again—hastened to inform the Army of her return. One or two of the officers, who loved her too well to wish her any more suffering, thought in their hearts that she had been tried enough, and would have been content to let her marry Eppy, but they were borne down by George Howarth's vehement opinion. He saw nothing but the direct interposition of Providence in Jesse Wynn's absence on the preceding night. Norah must be preserved for the service of God, for what was her present pain compared with the loss of her soul? It was a hard doctrine they felt for the sorely-burdened girl, but they consented to do their utmost to keep her to her determination, and to prevent Eppy winning her back. It was also agreed that she should not return to Michael Kerby's, but continue to live with the sisters, and then Howarth went to talk it over with Norah.

It was evening when he arrived, and she was sitting up, too weary to think, and content to be soothed by the love and tenderness of those around her. She could not help a little shudder as he came in: he reminded her too keenly of the struggle to come. The peace and rest were only for a time—to-morrow or the next day she would be well again, and with the renewal of the old desires would come the old strife. She was prepared to take up her burden; need he be so anxious to bind it on at once? One of the sisters, who had some idea of what was coming, sat with Norah and held her hand, feeling that she would be thankful for even this mute sympathy. They talked awhile on indifferent matters, and then Howarth turned to his purpose, speaking with pained directness, that left no doubt of his sincerity and sorrow.

'It makes my heart sad to see thee like this, Norah, but for thy soul's sake I'm glad. Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth. Norah Kerby, I, who am not worthy, am become the Lord's messenger charged to tell you that you take His yoke upon you. It's a bitter task for thee, but He will give you strength. Think of those that have trodden the strait path before you—at the end is the peace of God that passeth all understanding.'

There was silence for a little while. Norah was still too weak to fully appreciate what lay before her, and it was very coldly,

with no rapture of self-denial, and yet with no longings towards the past, that she spoke at last—

‘I shall do my best. But it’ll be hard—hard! You must bear with me sometimes.’

Nothing else was said, and George Howarth left the room awed by the humility of that beautiful soul. His was a painful religion, but in his heart he arraigned his Master for laying so sore a burden on one who so little needed such a trial.

CHAPTER VI.

THE next day a vague report reached Jesse Wynn that Mrs. Kerby had turned Norah out of the house, and with much distress he guessed she must have come and found him absent. In the evening he went to the Kerby’s, but beyond finding that Norah had indeed gone, his enquiries resulted in nothing but abuse of himself and his son. Nor could he hear of her from anyone else, till at last he met George Howarth, who he suspected would know all about her. He went straight to the point.

‘Some o’ yo Salvation folk have got hold o’ Norah Kerby?’

‘Well?’

‘Nobbut that I want to see her, that’s all.’

‘You can’t.’

‘Can’t? This is a free country, I reckon. She’s noan o’ thine. She’s going to marry my lad Eppy.’

‘Jesse Wynn, you have grown old in iniquity, and trained up your son to follow in the same paths: know that Norah Kerby is a servant of the Lord’s, and consorts no more with atheists and unbelievers.’

‘Sithee, George Howarth, I’m an owd mon now, as tha says, that’s done thee mony a good turn i’ thy time, and knows more about thee and thy ways than tha thinks. It isn’t for the likes o’ thee to be calling me names. I know thy sort likes to be little God Almighty’s and manage other folk’s business for them, but who art tha to come between a lad and a lass as loves one another?’

‘Who am I? A humble instrument of God’s will.’

‘Humble be damned! Let’s ha’ no more o’ that cant. I know thee, George Howarth, for t’ proudest toad as ever trod these streets, aye, and one o’ t’ blackest-hearted too. But tha may go thy ways; tha’ll find tha’s made a mistake this time!’

With all his old indignation against the professors of religion rekindled, and angry too that he should have given them such an opportunity for their schemes, Jesse Wynn went home and wrote Eppy a brief account of what had happened, entreating him to get back as soon as possible, for only he could set things right again.

It was several days before Eppy could finish his work, but as soon as he returned he sought out George Howarth. They stood silent a minute or two when they met, for each felt the struggle had begun in earnest, and braced himself to win the first move in the game. Then Eppy spoke—

‘Tha knows what I’m come for?’

‘Yes.’

‘Art tha going to tell me where Norah Kerby is?’

‘No.’

Eppy’s anger blazed out at last. ‘Remember, she’s mine and not thine! After what tha’s been through tha’rt noan fit to touch her hand, let alone come between her and me!’

The taunt struck home, but though for half a minute Howarth hardly managed to contain his passion, he rose above it.

‘For my sins I shall have to answer to my Maker, not to you.’

Eppy felt that he had made a mistake and given his adversary an advantage, so he cooled down again and went on quietly—

‘And does tha think tha can go on like this? If there’s any keeping her shut up, there’s a newspaper and police as’ll see to it. Tha may as well make up thy mind to one thing—I’ll see yon lass and have it out wi’ her, if I have to fetch her out o’ one of your meetings. Tha’ knows well enough that she’ll bother noan about thee nor t’ Army neither if she wants to speak to me.’

Howarth gloomily recognised that this was true, and that it would perhaps be better to concede a point, and let him see Norah now, while she was fresh in her self-devotion. So he thought a little, then looked up and said—

‘Come here to-morrow night and you shall see her. But don’t suppose there’s any compulsion from me or anyone else: it’s God’s doing, who is not willing to lose one of His elect.’

‘God and t’ devil seem much alike i’ thy religion!’ was all Eppy said as he went away.

When Norah was told, she refused to let anyone be with her when Eppy came. She felt strong enough to need no protection against herself, and a third person would only hinder a perfect understanding between them. It was not that she had lost her

love, but 'put away self' had been the one guiding line to which she had been able to cling during the strained thinking of the past week, and the very hunger of her desire for Eppy only made its renunciation seem more necessary.

She had been reading the Bible to calm her agitation when he came in, and at the first sight of him she passed silently through the great struggle. She wavered only a moment, and his cause was lost before he said a word. He came to her with outstretched hands—

'Eh! I'm fain to see thee again, Norah! What's this they're telling me about thee?'

'Eppy,' she said, putting her hands on his shoulder and looking him wistfully in the face, 'tha must learn to do without me.'

'Nay, lass, I can't do that! What's set thee against me?'

'I were wrong ever to think of marrying thee. I'm the Lord's servant and must follow Him.'

'If tha loves me tha can follow the Lord without leaving me.'

'Tha knows I love thee, and always shall. But, Eppy, marryings and givings in marriage are not for me. I've the sins of others to take on me besides my own.'

'I can't do without thee, lass!' he almost cried; 'tha's let them overpersuade thee to this. Tha can't mean to punish me so because I were out o' t' road t' other night.'

'Nay, Eppy, it's naught as tha's done, nor anything that's been said. It's God Himself has shown me the right way.' They stood silent for a little while and looked at one another, then she began again—'Eppy, Eppy! if tha could only learn His righteousness, I could be happy for ever and ask no more i' this world!'

'Leaving me's noan t' road to make me believe. I can make naught of a God that puts this trouble between us.'

'It's for tha good of us both, Eppy; the good of us both! It's shown me where my duty is.'

'I cannot see it, lass! If tha loves me, tha's a duty to me and thyself. I shall never give thee up, Norah. Tha's told me tha loves me!'

His passion mastered him, and he took her gently in his arms. She rested there a moment, forgetting everything, but it was only for an instant, and she suddenly tore herself away.

'Eppy, tha must go,' and her face seemed lit up with the exaltation of her purpose. 'I am not for thee—I have given myself to God.'

He looked at her a little, as if to realise the extent of his loss, then turned away without another word and left the room.

CHAPTER VII.

NORAH had won her victory, but it left her dazed and stricken, so that she escaped at once from everyone and tried to find forgetfulness in sleep. The next day or two were the same, the glow had faded away, and she was full of regrets and resentments at the sacrifice she had forced upon herself, overshadowed too by a terrible doubt, that it had all been in vain, and that Eppy was right when he rejected so cruel a God. But on the third day she roused herself, went back to her work and threw herself into the cause of the Army with new eagerness; if she had given herself to God, as she had said, let her then be about her Master's business, and she would have no time for these weaknesses. The majority of the Salvationists felt a vulgar self-satisfaction at her return, and congratulated themselves that such activity had been saved for the cause; but a few, whose love made them more keensighted, saw how she was wearing herself away, and that she would not be able to stand the strain unless it were lightened before long. Amongst them was George Howarth, who grew daily more gloomy. Norah was further from him than ever, for she seemed to mistrust him the more for the part he had played in separating her from Eppy; he had saved her soul indeed, but likely enough at the cost of her life, and involuntarily he accused his God of a cruelty no religion could explain. Meanwhile Norah was preaching with a passion and fervour she had never attained before; the Army flourished exceedingly, for people came from far and near to hear this slight girl, who seemed almost to have withdrawn herself from earth, so much did the spiritual radiance within shine through its earthly dress. Every night a little band of converts would come to enrol themselves, strong men trembling and sobbing with their awakening, wild profligates and hardened women, who heard in Norah the very voice of God. Once in the full tide of her inspiration, she caught sight of Eppy's earnest, wistful face at the back; she faltered a moment and almost broke down, but rose above herself again, and never more entirely than on that evening did she draw her hearers with her to the heights and depths of her emotion, as she reasoned with them of righteousness and judgment to come. She had conquered once again, but at a terrible cost; the next day she was really ill, and though she was about again almost at once, it was with lessened

power, that she strove to make up for by more unremitting exertions. Eppy could not help coming to hear her, though he hated the Salvation Army as the cause of all his misery; it was the only way of seeing Norah, and at times the longing, only to look upon her face, was too much for him. To ordinary observers he was not changed, a little more silent perhaps, a little more engrossed in his work, and less interested than usual in the things around him, while you might have detected a new and mournful tenderness in the way he caressed his dog or lifted up a child who had fallen in the street. He would forget himself among his machinery during the day, though now and then he would throw himself back and open his arms with a hidden sigh, as the memory returned of what he had lost, and at night he would dream for hours over his violin and only arouse himself for a chat with his father. Jesse Wynn was very sad at heart, and watched over his son with womanly tenderness; he felt painfully how impotent he was, and while he admired the way Eppy bore up, something of his old bitterness against religion came back, when he thought of its effect on these two young lives.

One Sunday night they were talking together, when the door opened and a girl entered, whom Eppy remembered as belonging to the Salvation Army.

‘Does Epicurus Wynn live here?’

‘Aye. What then?’

‘Th’art wanted.’

‘What for?’ he enquired.

‘Norah Kerby wants thee; she’s dying!’ and the girl burst into tears. Both men started up at once, Eppy went to put on his coat, he just shook hands with his father, for neither of them could say anything, and went out with firm-set face to meet the end. On their way through the town, the girl managed between her sobs to tell him a little of what had taken place. Norah had been ailing for some time, and on the Tuesday before had broken down entirely, so that they had at last become alarmed and sent for a doctor. As soon as he saw her, he had turned savagely on them and demanded why he had not been called before, for it was evident to him that he was powerless, and that she could not live many weeks. The end was coming sooner than even he had expected; her intense spirit had fretted through its frail tenement, and once she had given way she failed rapidly, for it was only by mere force of will that she had kept up so long. That evening she felt death near at hand and had asked to see Eppy again.

She lay propped up in bed, and the bare, cold room took a new haggardness from the pallor of her face. It was the same face Eppy had always loved, but the lines were bitten deeper, the high forehead seemed more prominent, and the eyes moved and flashed with an added brilliancy. Eppy could say nothing when he entered, but fell on his knees at the bedside, overborne by a great wave of passionate feeling; she also was too weak and distressed to speak, but dumbly tried to comfort him by stroking his hair with her thin hand.

‘Don’t sorrow, lad, for me,’ she said at length. ‘There’s no more trouble for me now; it’s thee that’s left behind in the world that’s got it all to bear.’ Her words loosened the load that seemed crushing Eppy, and he broke down entirely into a fit of tears that only died down into great inarticulate sobs and heavings. He kissed her once or twice, but he had few words for his grief; silent at all times, she would understand him best now when he said nothing. He told the people round her that he meant to watch with her through the night, and they respected the depth of his affliction and left the two together. She was too enfeebled to talk, and always clasping Eppy’s hand slept by snatches through most of the night, but now and then she would say a few words.

‘I think they might have let us love one another. I fear I were wrong, Eppy, and tha wert right. There’s room in the heart for both man’s love and God’s love.’

These were the last words she said; the solemn light of dawn had just touched her face, when she looked again at Eppy, and in that look the end came, and the eager, wearied soul found rest at last.

It was a little while after this that George Howarth entered the room; his great affliction had burnt away all anger from Eppy’s mind, he only rose and pointed at the still, silent form. Howarth made no protestations, but turned away; and Eppy was alone once more.

A. D. HALL.

Hosts and Guests.

AMONG the pleasures of life a very high place must be assigned to giving and receiving hospitality, to sharing as hosts with sympathetic friends the ampler means which we may possess, to contributing as guests social qualities, good spirits, bright conversation, and the charms of song, which add the feast of reason and the flow of soul to the grosser materials of social gatherings.

But as in all pleasures there must be discrimination between higher and lower, between the ephemeral and the lasting, it may be worth while to analyse the forms to be observed, the risks to be avoided, as host or as guest. The commonplace phrase 'entertaining company' has a real meaning. The first point is to avoid boring or being bored. If we collect a party at dinner, for the brief time of two or three hours, we are bound, as hosts, to make such a selection of guests that they will amuse each other and ourselves: we are bound, as guests, to contribute to the utmost of our ability to the general amusement.

Much more important are these considerations in the case of a party invited to pass some time in a country house; and how much more difficult are they to accomplish!

In feudal times the hospitality of the rich and the great, from the Sovereign down to the smallest baron, exceeded anything which in the present time we can easily form a notion of. Westminster Hall was the dining-room of William Rufus, and might sometimes perhaps be not too large for his company. It was reckoned a piece of magnificence in Thomas Becket, that he strewed the floor of his hall with clean hay, or rushes in the season, in order that the knights and squires who could not get seats might not spoil their fine clothes when they sat down on the floor to eat their dinner. The great Earl of Warwick is said to have entertained every day, at his manors, thirty thousand

people; and though the number may have been exaggerated, it must have been very great to admit of such exaggeration. 'A hospitality nearly of the same kind was exercised not many years ago in many different parts of the Highlands of Scotland,' writes Adam Smith in the last century.

The hospitality of the present day cannot be contemptible when, on the occasion of a Royal Jubilee or a Golden Wedding, many thousands are invited and feasted, when relations, friends, neighbours, dependents have their due share of the good things and good feelings of hosts.

The characteristic of the present day is the great variety of entertainment. There are hunting, shooting, fishing guests; cricket meetings, lawn tennis gatherings, musical meetings, garden parties, breakfasts, luncheons, teas, dinners, dances, drums, amateur theatricals, each and all requiring preparations of the most elaborate kind by the intending hosts, and the subordinates who carry out the details, from the sending out of the invitations to the welcoming, the entertaining, and the speeding the guests.

To men and women of cultivated tastes and refined habits, whose lives are in great part spent in towns, the stay at a great country place, the home for generations of birth and breeding, has an inexpressible charm. The exquisite gardens, the conservatories, the rare shrubs, the ancestral trees, the deer park, the elastic turf-drives so picturesque and varied, the taking exercise in agreeable society and exhilarating air, are all fresh sources of pleasure. Within doors are well-warmed, well-lighted suites of drawing-rooms; a library where both light and standard literature are found, where the newest books of reference may be consulted and the oldest have their place on the shelves; the picture gallery with historical portraits, as well as specimens of Italian, Spanish, or Dutch masters; the spacious dining-room, where there is no crowding of chairs; the fine plate, the Dresden china, the lovely flowers and foliage plants, the varied breakfast dishes and scones, the ample lunch and the dainty dinner, with the perfectly trained staff of domestics. What a delightful contrast to small rooms, inferior cooks, and clumsy servants! Nor must we omit, among the out-of-doors objects of interest, the model farm, with pedigree shorthorns and 'dexter kerries,' the dairy fitted up with Dutch tiles, the cream from a 'separator,' the fairy pats of butter, so unlike margarine mixture and sky-blue milk. The stables, full of high-spirited,

well-mannered horses for draft or saddle, the carriages of every size and form, not excluding a sledge. All these appurtenances of a fully equipped country house form an exhibition of their own. But the chief attraction must always be the gracious and thoughtful hostess, who has a smile for every one, an instinctive perception of wants and wishes, an indefatigable power of putting guests on good terms with themselves, and a store of vivacity to light up dull pauses and turn aside dangerous allusions. She must conceal her disappointment when the guest who was to be the life and soul of the gathering cannot keep his promise to come, when the weather spoils the garden party or the picnic, when the ladies are all cross because the men are away with gun or rod or hounds; or, most trying of all, when the private theatricals, from which so much was expected, are wrecked by green-room squabbles.

'It is desirable,' writes Sir Henry Taylor, 'that what the rich and great expend on enjoyment should really contribute to enjoyment; in libraries, and works of art, pictures, sculpture and engravings, a rich house cannot be too rich, and the house of an educated gentleman should no more be without the works of Michael Angelo or Raphael, in one form or another, than without the works of Shakespeare and Milton.' We add that to have guests and friends who appreciate art and books must add greatly to enjoyment. Sir Henry Taylor bears witness to the grace and simplicity of manner which distinguish the aristocracy, but speaks of fashionable society when compared with aristocratic society as characterised by some inferiority of tone, even in its higher walks; in its lower, it can hardly be called anything else than vulgar.

In these days of easy access to distant counties, it often happens that guests who fit perfectly into one circle offer themselves to another, just when they are somewhat out of place, only because, on their way to or from Scotland or the Land's End, it is convenient to group their visits. In such cases guests are bound to make themselves doubly agreeable, and to submit to a smaller share of the good things provided than if they had been especially asked. 'Only once during all these visits have I been taken in to dinner by a gentleman' is the frequent plaint of a girl who, after all, was self-invited.

'What can I find to amuse me in this gathering?' says an elderly guest; 'only boys and girls who talk and think of lawn tennis and the winner of the tournament.'

'Yes, I did get my rubber; but my partner never answered my signals, and, but for his always holding honours, I should,' &c.

'Pony!' said a little girl, a guest; 'you call that a nice pony? I call it grovelling!'

'Luncheon over!' says a man who would start at twelve for a three hours' walk. 'Oh, let me have a glass of beer and some bread and cheese.'

'Very sorry, sir,' says footman, 'but the butler has the key, and he is out.'

'What a beastly house!' the hostess just contrives to hear.

But grumbling or ungrateful guests either mend their manners or cease to be guests. The education of life is always going on in some form, with its rewards and penalties, and other people's houses and ways teach self-control and self-denial.

One of the difficulties to be adjusted is that of temperature. We know Mrs. Carlyle's sufferings from unlighted fires and hard-hearted housemaids at a great house. We know instances of conjugal happiness being destroyed, not by incompatibility of temper, but of temperature. We know, too, the languor that steals over the most brilliant company when the supply of oxygen is exhausted.

As there are some houses where artificial light is required all the year round, there are many which require artificial heat all the year round; but not the heat of pipes, water, or air, but of a brisk wood fire, which ventilates as well as warms. Hot-water pipes not only do not ventilate, they distribute bad air, and too often, in connection with the other pipes, they distribute the germs of fever. Fixed baths and fixed washing-stands should never be placed in bedrooms; and, other considerations apart, a guest on hand with typhoid fever, even if caught at the preceding visit, is undesirable.

A virtue not to be lost sight of by hosts or guests is punctuality. Let all the hours of meals or meetings, of starting by carriage or train, for pleasure or business, be known beforehand and be adhered to. A very slight effort is required to do this, and a very great advantage is obtained. It is easy to adjust our movements to punctuality; it is impossible for the many persons who depend on fixed hours to adjust the service we ask from them to capricious or reckless unpunctuality.

An important change has taken place, within our memory, in the length of time visitors are expected to stay, and an invitation for three or four days is much more common than one for three or four weeks. The old habit of spending a month in another man's

house is now obsolete, except perhaps in the case of some very old bachelor friend of the family.

The duration of visits must remain a delicate point, best met by the host fixing it when issuing the invitation. Extreme intimacy or an unforeseen emergency may warrant a guest's saying, 'Will you let me stay another day, or a few days?' but rarely should this request be made. Vague invitations are a mistake on the part of hosts; they often cause embarrassment on one side and mortification on the other. These invitations may be well-meaning, but certainly are weak-minded. A vast amount of grumbling would be avoided if all invitations were for a definite time. It often happens that a vague invitation, or some friendly remark not really intended for an invitation, is thrown out; weeks and months elapse; the careless words are forgotten on one side, but carefully remembered on the other; the would-be guests recall them; the reluctant hosts feel annoyed at 'So-and-so' offering a visit, perhaps at an inconvenient time; and the end of it is that neither host nor guest enjoys the few days spent together; the host has been to blame rather than the guest.

Among the incidents of country-house life which sometimes embarrass guests are the gratuities to servants; there can hardly be a tariff for tips, and the purse of the giver has to be considered as well as the services of the recipient. A modest gratuity to the groom of the chambers, where that functionary is part of the household—to the footman in small houses—is due from every gentleman. The keeper expects a 'fee,' and murmurs and bears in mind if those who have gold to give dole him out silver. But a gentleman will always feel it unbecoming to obtain by sheer bribery the best place in a large battue, or, indeed, to offer a bribe on any occasion.

A helpful housemaid or tire-woman will deserve her tip; but ladies must bear in mind that 'maids' do not offer their services to their mistresses' guests, and ladies who travel without their own maids should not expect or require much help, either in dressing or packing, or brushing muddy skirts.

It must be borne in mind by all parties that servants are in the receipt of suitable wages, and, when engaged, are not told that their wages are to be enhanced by a system of tips.

Between the railway station and the hospitable mansion there is a space of greater or less ground to be traversed by fly or omnibus and not all hosts have it in their power or inclination to fetch their guests. It is well to know beforehand what the

arrangements are to be, and some hosts add a notice on the subject: 'Carriages to be had, on such and such terms, by writing to innkeeper or station-master, distance so-and-so.' As guests may bring servants and must bring luggage, the conveyance of their impedimenta is of supreme importance. 'I can easily walk,' says an active woman; 'my boxes, maid, and man can't.'

For boxes there must be, of all sorts and sizes. In paying visits, the standard of dress in the most sumptuous house and in the most simple has to be consulted, and several kinds of dress brought. The maid must bring her more modest portmanteau; and the man, knowing that at some houses it is expected that guests bring their own blacking and shoe-brushes, has an extra box containing these. In old days it was the custom to have a *fourgon* for servants and luggage, and nowadays an omnibus or series of flies must be ordered in advance if the party is a large one, or if the requirements of a small party are large.

In France the host and hostess think themselves bound not to lose sight of their guests after the late breakfast at which they meet. This is an irksome arrangement for all parties. In this island the liberty of the subject prevails, and there is a tacit understanding that, after our earlier breakfast, everyone can do as he pleases—read, walk, or work—the hosts counting on some leisure for their own duties or occupations. The afternoon is the time for drives or long walks. Unfortunately, in some houses, a late luncheon-hour curtails the afternoon, and this in the winter months, the very months when most country-house parties take place. One of the most brilliant of hosts used to start so late for the Sunday afternoon walk, that he always said, 'We ought to be armed with lanterns.'

The question of hours is not an easy one to adjust. Very late dinners, the fashion of the day, carry with them sitting up late, getting up late, and crowding breakfast and luncheon into close proximity, and entail difficulties and perplexities in the household as well as wastefulness; but the curfew is out of date, and so is the adage:

Early to bed and early to rise,
Makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise.

It is not within my province to penetrate the mysteries of the smoking-room, but the habit of adjourning there after the ladies have retired is universal. It takes the place of the after-dinner sittings of our ancestors. The liveliest sallies, the most piquant

stories, are said to be reserved for that symposium. There is a distinctive garb, the embroidered smoking gown and cap, not less elaborate than the tea gown of the weaker sex, though the beverage is said to be—no doubt a calumny—brandy and soda-water.

One of the most useful and agreeable qualifications for the social intercourse which is the *raison d'être* of a great part of country-house life is a power of conversation—of polished conversation, be it remembered, not mere tittle-tattle, not inelegant extracts from the day's newspaper, not crude or careless utterances as to things in general from our own point of view, not ill-directed allusions to births, deaths, and marriages. It is usual to sneer at a knowledge of the contents of the 'Peerage' or the 'Landed Gentry,' but it would be well to learn the ramifications of the pedigree of our hosts or guests, so as to run no risk of allusions which give offence, or of awarding the wrong precedence. I am so conscious of my own want of authority to deal with conversation, that I shall borrow the words of the master mind on that subject—Lord Chesterfield—'Imitate with discernment and judgment the real perfections of the good company into which you may get; talk often, but never long; tell stories seldom, and absolutely never but when they are very apt and very short; take rather than give the tone of the company you are in; avoid as much as you can argumentative conversations; above all things and upon all occasions avoid speaking of yourself. Form yourself with regard to others upon what pleases you in them; avoid loud laughter and those tricks of fingers or feet which are the result of ill-bred shyness. Bear in mind that vulgar and ill-chosen words will deform the best thoughts; seek for the best words and think of the best terms. Never yield to the temptation of exposing other people's inaccuracies or defending your own.'

After being told what is not conversation, the ingenuous youth of either sex may well ask what is so; the answer is somewhat vague: cultivate your mind and your memory, wait in patience for the opportunity of showing that you too are familiar with the subject discussed, that you can add a detail, verify a quotation, or remove a doubt. Never omit to show courtesy to silent or neglected guests: you can thus lessen their isolation, relieve the cares of your hostess, and in doing so exercise your own conversational gifts. The graces and gifts of conversation are a tempting subject to dwell on; but in these remarks we attempt to deal rather with the relations of hosts and guests, and to those we will now revert.

Besides the hospitality of country houses are other modes

and forms not less befitting to hosts or welcome to guests. There are yachts which give balmy sleep and renewed appetite, not only to their owners, but to successive friends who on land have lost the power to sleep or eat. There are club trains to the sunny South, by which may travel not only the millionaire but his college friend, whose waning power of work is renewed or stimulated by the holiday his own slender purse could not afford. There is the rich old London bachelor who invites his country friends in the season to be his guests at an hotel; he suggests the exhibitions they shall visit in a morning, the theatres they shall go to in an evening—always as his guests—and, if health and tastes permit, he accompanies or escorts them. The imagination and the means of a rich man or woman can find plenty of ways of adding to their own enjoyment that of being host or hostess, and, in passing from the position of host to guest, will find something to alter, to copy, or to modify.

There is a modest hospitality as well as a munificent one. The small vicarage, the seaside villa, with its two or three or even one spare room, can offer fresh air and friendly if homely up-putting hospitality, with little luxury and no ostentation. So can the small town house, where the temporary absence of a son or daughter makes a spare room, and the country cousin is asked up to see the park and the pictures, to attend a Monday Pop, to lay in a store of new ideas and topics for rustic consumption—and between the very great and the very modest forms of welcome there are many intermediate gradations.

The best guest is the one who conforms with the least apparent effort to the ways of the house; and this faculty is for most people only to be acquired by a long course of visits and a varied experience of what may be called the vicissitudes of country-house life. The perfect guest should demean himself as if the hours and arrangements of the house where he finds himself were those of his own choice, and not hint that he was better off where he stayed last. It is sometimes said that men make more comfortable guests than women. They certainly are more ready to take what may be going on. They do not require breakfast in bed, or the services of the housemaid to the exclusion of her other duties. They are less prone to repeat in one house the domestic gossip which they heard in another, or to make comparisons of the merits of their hospitable friends.

We reserve for the last some allusion to the difficulties of the selection of guests. Only to the very largest garden party is it

possible to invite all our acquaintances; there are inevitable limitations to all other entertainments. It requires great skill so to select from acquaintances and neighbours as to avoid giving offence and creating jealousy; and it needs real good sense and good temper to submit with grace to being left out or to being invited to the less exclusive circle. How much bitterness is created by want of care in making out lists for invitations by asking people who are dead, or who have never been born, by omitting the name of someone who had a just claim to remembrance, is only known when it is too late to avoid the fault. It is a pleasure to record one conspicuous instance of thought and courtesy by a great lady. She had carefully gone over the old list of guests when about to issue invitations for the first party she was to receive as hostess; she then asked an old *habitué* of that brilliant house to look over the names and to tell her if anyone was left out of the old friends of her father-in-law.

Life in the country houses of Scotland, especially in those months which have been happily called 'the holidays of the Highlands,' has a peculiar charm scarcely to be met with south of the Tweed. There is a greater freedom in the air; a pleasant absence of conventionality. The visits paid are usually longer; the field-sports are more varied and exhilarating; the scenery is more impressive than the gloom of an English park; the incidents of the day are more exciting. It is not my intention to intermingle any personal reminiscences with these few remarks on the hospitalities of our friends and our neighbours, and it would be invidious to refer to those of the present day. But, as long as memory lasts, who that witnessed them in the last generation can forget the exquisite refinements of Keir, the unflagging gaiety of Brahan, the widely-watered shores of distant Skibo, the statelier circles of Dunrobin, Inverary, or Minard, and the cheerful houses of Teviotdale? Time and death have swept most of their genial hosts away, to be succeeded, no doubt, by another generation of not less courteous hosts and happy guests, whom the modern facilities of travel pour into Scotland every autumn in increasing numbers—sometimes, it must be confessed, in embarrassing numbers, for the Scotch hospitality has not unfrequently to provide for self-invited visitors to an extent not common elsewhere.

As we move southwards the forms of reception become somewhat more rigid. Set parties are made and invited beforehand. The duration of the visit is fixed and is short. And as we

approach the metropolis, which is the centre of English social life, the tone of society, even in country houses, is influenced by the statesmen, the politicians, the lawyers, the artists, and the men of letters, who belong not so much to the country as to London. Such, for many years, under Lord Shelburne and his more distinguished son, the third Marquis of Lansdowne, were pre-eminently Bowood, and Petworth under Lord Egremont, the resort alike of all that was best and most brilliant in letters, in the arts, and in statesmanship. To Cashiobury and the Grove, Lord Essex and Lord Clarendon drew a stream of London visitors, interspersed with a lively foreign element. Even Holland House was almost a country mansion in Kensington and Strawberry Hill at Twickenham.

Nor must we forget the great lawyers of the past, Lord Wensleydale, Lord Kingsdown, and Lord Westbury, who gathered round them at Ampthill, Torryhill, and Hinton, a cheerful circle to sweep away the cobwebs of Westminster Hall and Lincoln's Inn. These are names which will be recorded in the social memoirs of the times, and will be read by another generation, curious of the country life of their ancestors as we are of the contemporaries of Horace Walpole.

But we are trenching on reminiscences which would be out of place here, and which can only be among the pleasures of memory.

CHRISTINE G. J. REEVE.

Snails.

TO the casual eye there are few creatures more unattractive than the common snail. His slime offends our sense of cleanliness; his form is thoroughly ungraceful, and lacks the pretty bands of colour which redeem from plainness the shells of some of his smaller relatives. And then gardeners give him such a bad character. The blame of a large proportion of the damage done by predatory birds and insects to flowers, fruit, and vegetables is laid at his door. Slugs, wire-worms, and the great army of caterpillars feast to their hearts' content upon cabbages, strawberries, or geranium-leaves, but it is to the unfortunate snail that the major part of the havoc they work is attributed. There is no denying the fact that this ungainly creature has a great partiality for the cabbage-bed and the pea-row, but he is sought after by far too many enemies to give him the opportunity of being a quarter so destructive as is generally supposed. The fondness of blackbirds and thrushes for snails is as great as that of any schoolboy for ices in hot weather, and hedgehogs, toads, and glow-worms pursue them with relentless vigour. So though in this country the snail escapes the cooking-pot, except in the gypsy camp, he is not allowed to increase and multiply as he chooses. The wonder is that, considering the activity of his foes and his own slowness, he is so common.

The snail is really as interesting an animal as is to be found in our gardens, and deserves a better fate than the pitiless crushing which usually awaits him at the feet of the gardener whose path he happens to cross. If you wish to examine a snail, procure a piece of glass and place him upon it. It is useless to expect him to seem at ease in your hand, for the snail is a cold-blooded animal, and your warm flesh must be nearly as uncomfortable to him as the top of the kitchen range would be to you. The coolness of a bit of glass is congenial to him; he will adhere firmly to it with his broad sucker-like foot, and will probably proceed to

crawl along it, expanding and contracting alternately this foot of his, which is really the whole under part of his body. Looking at his small rate of progress, you will probably be surprised at the rapidity with which the contractions and expansions of his foot follow one another; they cause quite a rippling of the surface of his body, and seem as though a good deal of exertion were required to produce even so slow a movement as his. Most likely your snail will keep on protruding his feelers, or 'horns,' as they are usually called, in a tentative kind of manner as he makes his way towards the edge of the glass. If you put a finger in front of him he will probably walk straight on until one of these feelers comes in contact with it. The moment that the obstruction is thus made known to him, he will draw in his horns, and stopping his journey push them out again in a timid and hesitating fashion, plainly endeavouring to ascertain by the sense of touch whether it is still in his way or no. If he happens to be rather a wide-awake specimen of his race, he will most likely discern the presence of your finger when the tip of his horn is about the twentieth of an inch away from it; the tentacle will wave slowly about, rearing itself aloft and diving down in evident attempts to see whether the obstacle can be passed. We say to *see* intentionally, for the minute black speck at the extreme end of each of the snail's longer feelers are the animal's eyes—very imperfect and rudimentary organs of vision, but still capable of discriminating between light and darkness and of sometimes discovering the presence of a foreign body, provided that it is of a fair size. The lower and shorter tentacles are without the eyes which grace the tips of the longer ones, and seem to be solely used as *feelers*. The way in which a snail withdraws his horns is very curious. They are not pulled bodily back into suitable receptacles, but are literally turned inside out just like the fingers of a glove that is drawn off backwards. It would naturally be supposed that the snail would be very susceptible in these delicate and useful organs. Their sensitiveness shows that this is so, and yet he is, comparatively speaking, indifferent to the loss of them. If you care to sacrifice the feelings of the animal to the gratification of your curiosity you may cut off his tentacles with a pair of scissors. Blinded and at the same time deprived of his guardian feelers, one would imagine that he would soon die; but nothing of the sort need be apprehended. As is only natural he will with the utmost possible expedition retire into the depths of his shell, probably to remain there for some days. Presently, however, he

will emerge again, and if he is in a proper state of health, and the operation has been performed fairly early in the season, in about a month new horns will be seen sprouting, which will shortly attain to the size of those destroyed, and, duly provided with eyes, will guide the way of their bearer as their predecessors did. Should your taste for research remain unsatisfied after this rather cruel experiment, you may, without fear of doing permanent injury to the snail, boldly decapitate him. The persevering creature will after the lapse of a few months produce an entirely new head, properly provided with horns and in all respects just as good as the one of which you robbed him. Truly in some respects the despised animals at the lower end of the scale of creation are to be envied. If one of us lose so unimportant a portion of our frames as a finger we can by no art replace it, yet here we have one of

Ye little snails, with slippery tails,
Who noiselessly travel across the gravel,

rivalling with no apparent effort the fabled performances of the hydra-headed monster with which Hercules had so hard a struggle. The snail is not unprovided with other organs to help him in finding his way about the world. He has, for instance, a fairly well-developed ear, which lies close to the roots of his horns, and his sense of smell is quite highly developed. No doubt, it is by this sense that he guides himself to those vegetables which are dear to his palate.

In spite of the assertion of Moquier Tandon, who stated that his researches into the habits of snails had convinced him that they were very intelligent, and of the opinion of Oken, who goes so far as to speak of 'circumspection and foresight as appearing to characterise the thoughts of snails,' we fear that this creature's brain must be deemed as slow as his bodily movements. The organ is curiously situated, lying in a kind of circle round the animal's throat, and thus seeming to point to the assumption that the satisfying of his appetite is the utmost to which the snail's mental powers carry him. His breathing apparatus is of the very simplest description. While the snail, which we imagine you have before you on a piece of glass all this time, is crawling along, you should look carefully at his right side. You will probably be a good deal surprised to see that every now and again a distinct hole appears here, which remains open for a few moments and then closes again. This trap-door is nothing more or less than the entrance to our friend's lungs. It does not comprise any elaborate

mechanism such as that with which those who have studied human physiology in ever so cursory a manner are familiar, but is simply a recess in the animal's body, which is provided with a mouth capable of being opened and shut at the pleasure of its owner. It is hard to conceive a more rudimentary arrangement for purposes of breathing. No apparatus for the inhaling of pure air and the expulsion of that loaded with carbonic acid is connected with it. It is merely a hole with which the creature's veins are connected, and into which he allows a certain quantity of air to enter, as the need for it suggests itself to him. When the air has, in this primitive fashion, found its way into the interior economy of our snail, he keeps it there until the oxygen, with which it is charged, has been exhausted by his vital processes; the carbonic acid-laden residue is allowed to escape by a re-opening of the mouth of the hole in his side, and is replaced by more pure air, which flows in through the gap. Practically speaking, the snail's breathing is accomplished in precisely the same manner as a room is aired by the occasional opening of one of its windows. We may suppose a number of human beings to be congregated in a small room, in the same manner as the snail's veins are collected about his breathing-hole. After a certain time they render foul the air that the room contains, and to provide them with a fresh supply, at the same time allowing the vitiated stock to escape, a window is opened, with the result that the bad air escapes through it and is replaced by fresh air from outside. As soon as the atmosphere of the room is again in a satisfactory condition, we may imagine the window to be closed until it is deemed necessary to open it once more. The snail's breathing is managed in a similar fashion to this. Nothing more clearly indicates the low development of the creature than this rudimentary method of keeping his frame supplied with the oxygen which is indispensable to all living things.

The mouth of the snail is armed with a very formidable instrument, in the shape of a remarkable saw-like tongue. Probably you have, at some time or another, noticed how cleanly cut are the edges of a leaf upon which a snail has been regaling himself. It is difficult to imagine how such a soft and flabby-looking animal can have made such clean incisions. But with an examination of the cutting instrument concealed in his mouth, wonder on this score vanishes. It resembles a long, narrow ribbon, coiled in such a manner that only a small portion of it is called into use at once. Thickly distributed over the entire surface of this ribbon are an immense number of excessively sharp little teeth, designed in a

manner which admirably adapts them to the purpose for which they are intended. The quantity of these teeth is incredible—one species, for instance, has been indisputably proved to possess as many as thirty thousand of them. The reason for their disposition on a coiled, ribbon-like surface lies in the fact that by use they become worn away. As this happens the ribbon is uncoiled, and the teeth which before were wrapped up in it, at the back of the snail's mouth, come forward to take the place of those which have served their turn. The upper part of the mouth consists of a horny surface against which the sharp-toothed tongue works. A leaf, which is to be operated upon, is caught between the two, and subjected to a regular file-like rasping on the part of the tongue. So effective an instrument does this form, that the tough leaves of the lily may often be found to be entirely rasped off by it.

And now we come to the consideration of the snail's shell—his 'house,' as people often call it, ignorant of the fact that the shell of the snail has no more claim to this title than their own skins have. We remember being regaled in childhood's days with pretty little stories of how the snail builds himself a snug little house, and carries it about with him from a deeply imbedded love of tidiness. As a matter of fact, the snail does not build his shell any more than he builds himself, and he carries it about with him for the all-sufficient reason that he cannot move without it. Evolutionists tell us that snails are simply slugs, which have in the course of long ages developed a tough and horny outer covering, as a protection against their numerous enemies, and a careful study of the structure of the two animals confirms this view. The familiar shell is simply the hardened outer surface of the body of the creature, bequeathed to him by ancestors who evolved it in response to the demands of nature. Soft-bodied animals, like the great tribe of molluscs to which the snail belongs, are exposed to the attacks of a large number of bigger creatures, which delight to prey upon them. In past ages, therefore, it is easy to conceive that the mollusc which, for some reason or another, succeeded in enduing his skin with a certain degree of hardness, stood a far better chance of weathering the storms of life than another, which was not so fortunate. The hard-bodied mollusc, naturally, would hand his peculiarity of structure down to his descendants, and among the latter those in whom it was most marked would be more likely to survive than the rest. And so through countless ages the tendency grew, until it has culminated in the horny protective shell which

surrounds the body of the snail found in our gardens to-day. A brief glance at other molluscs shows the plausibility of this theory. In the sea some of the tribe exist which are exposed to the assaults of enemies armed with powerful jaws and strong teeth. To enable them to adequately resist these aggressors, their shells have been developed until they are perfectly impervious to the attacks of even the most savage assailants. The oyster, the whelk, and the cowrie, which is better protected than either, are examples of the extent to which this process of hardening is capable of going. Then, on the other hand, we have the pretty little snails which pass their existence hidden beneath the shelter of stones and vegetation. Their shells are quite thin and fragile, and are not always even large enough to admit the whole of their bodies. They present as striking a contrast to the shell of the garden snail, which is tough enough to successfully withstand the onsets of sharp-beaked birds, as does the latter to the immensely stronger shells of the sea dwelling molluscs, which have been obliged, by the exigencies of their life, to provide themselves with a protection capable of holding out against the onslaughts of fish whose jaws would crunch up into powder the shells of their cousins of the garden. Slugs are nothing more than snails, which have lived such a life as to make it unnecessary for them to arm themselves against the attacks of their natural enemies. They do not pursue the comparatively bold policy of the snail, but skulk about under stones and in other places, where they are safe from observation and consequent destruction. But, for all that they are not entirely unprovided with the shells which are such a conspicuous feature of the snail. The *testacella*, for instance, is a kind of slug in which the shell takes the form of a shield which, in the creature's journeys along the burrows of the earthworms on which it feeds, fills up the tunnel in its rear and thus protects it from an assault in that direction. *Testacellæ* are by no means rare in this country, but are very seldom met with. They spend their lives underground hunting earthworms with a fierceness and persistency which one would never expect to encounter in one of the slug tribe. The brown slug has apparently no attempt at a shell whatever, but a little anatomical investigation will disclose the fact that, under the skin of this soft-looking creature is a small and flattened shield, very like that of the *testacella* in every way, except that it has somehow become imbedded in the body of its bearer, where its use is hard to discern. Probably the naturalist of a future generation, who examines one of these slimy animals, will not find any

trace of this useless appendage, which will have been eliminated, as every profitless possession of the kind is in the course of time. To take another example, the black slug which is so common an object along hedge-rows after a good downpour, does not possess any regular shell, either internal or external; but scattered about his body are a number of irregular lumps, which are plainly of the same origin as the shell of the snail, the external shield of the *testacella*, or the internal shield of the brown slug. Very young slugs have fairly developed shells, but as their growth increases, they either become absorbed or are imbedded in their bodies, in the form of the indefinite lumps we have described.

The snail emerges from a small egg which was buried in the ground by his mother, and from the very first shifts for himself, quite ignorant of a parent's watchful care. His shell in these early days is not the roomy concern in comparison to the size of his body that it afterwards becomes, but is little more than a film hardly strong enough to afford any protection at all. However, as he increases in size it grows both in thickness and capacity, until it is finally perfected when he is about eighteen months old, by the addition of the outer rim, which proclaims to the world the fact that he has left the days of childhood and immaturity behind. Spring is the season which sees the snail emerge from the egg. He attains to about half his full size before winter compels him to retire from active life for a while, accomplishing almost the whole of his growth during spring and autumn. The heat of summer seems in some mysterious way to militate against his development.

Snails always pass the winter in a state of hybernation. At the approach of the cold weather they scoop holes in the ground, which are carefully lined with dead leaves cemented to the sides with slime. In this snug retreat the creature ensconces himself, and, not content with the protection from the inclement weather thus afforded, closes the mouth of his shell with a diaphragm composed of slime, which gradually hardens. This diaphragm is not quite impervious, for it contains a minute perforation through which sufficient air enters to keep the vital mechanism of the prisoner just moving. The snail is not content with one protecting plate of this kind, but gradually withdraws into the deepest recesses of his shell, forming fresh diaphragms as he recedes. The layers of air enclosed between each pair of plates act as the most effective barrier to the entrance of cold. The hybernation of the snail is almost death. He scarcely breathes, and the heart's action is nearly in abeyance. In the early days of spring the

sleepers awakes, and proceeds to form another hole in the ground destined to become the receptacle for the cluster of eggs, varying in number from twenty to fifty, which are about to be laid, and which will hatch in about three weeks. Snails are hermaphrodite, but pair together. Their courtship is usually quite a long and solemn affair, involving the most grotesque display of affection. Mr. Jeffreys states that during their courting snails discharge at one another minute darts of crystalline appearance, which may be observed sticking in their bodies. Nothing very positive appears to be known regarding the origin and use of these peculiar proofs of attachment. M. Tandon speaks of *les guerres acharnées* of snails, and no doubt they do fight with a considerable amount of spirit. It is hardly necessary to say, however, that a combat of snails would not be found intensely exciting to the human onlooker; for though the combatants are no doubt in earnest, their movements are not sufficiently rapid to invest their feud with much appearance of ferocity.

It stands to reason that the shell of the snail must be built up from some mineral. It is really due to the presence of lime in plants on which the creature feeds. Chalky soils will be found to produce snails in which white predominates, while on such soils as contain no lime snails are never found. The chalky downs in the south of England are literally covered with small snails, and it is supposed by many that the superior flavour of Southdown mutton is due to the thousands of snails which the sheep which are pastured there devour with the grass they eat. This idea is no new one, for a century ago Borlase wrote that 'the sweetest Cornish mutton is that of the small sheep which feed on the commons where the sands are scarce covered with green sod and the grass is exceedingly short. From these sands come forth snails of the turbinated kind, which spread themselves over the plains and yield a most fattening nourishment to the sheep.' Another observer of days gone by says that 'snails so abound on the short grass above Whitsand Bay that it is impossible that animals should browse without devouring a prodigious quantity of them, especially by night, when they ascend the stunted blades,' and ventures the assertion that this animal food has a very beneficial effect upon the quality of the meat which the beasts partaking of it yield.

The common snail is not the member of the family which forms so favourite an article of food on the Continent. The apple-snail, or *Helix pomatia*, is the one thus distinguished. He is not at all common with us, and the fact that the few localities where

he is found are those in which Roman remains abound has given rise to a widely-spread and oft-repeated idea to the effect that he was introduced to our shores by the Romans. These people were undeniably exceedingly partial to apple-snails, fattening them for the table in places called *cochlearia*, where they were fed upon bran soaked with wine until they attained to fabulous dimensions. If Roman writers are to be believed, the process of fattening was carried out so successfully that specimens of *Helix pomatia* were reared whose shells were capable of holding ten quarts. Apple-snails have been met with in this country of such a size that their shells would hold a pound's worth of silver; but these would have been pigmies to the Roman productions if the latter really reached the dimensions attributed to them. As a matter of fact it appears that this large snail was introduced into England in the sixteenth century. The story goes that the first specimens were brought here that their efficacy in curing consumption might be tried in the case of a lady suffering from that disease. To the present day peasants in many parts of the country believe that snails boiled in milk are a certain cure for this terrible scourge. No doubt snails are nourishing, and it is not hard to believe that they might prove a beneficial article of diet to one attacked by a wasting disease. So long ago as the time of Pliny snails beaten up in warm water were recommended for the cure of coughs. In the middle of the last century a lady, whose letter has been handed down to us, wrote advising that a friend, who for a long time had been troubled by a cough at night, should try the effect of snails boiled in barley-water. She states that 'taken in time they have wrought wonderful cures. They give no manner of taste; but she must know nothing of it, and they must be fresh done every two or three days, otherwise they grow too thick.' This statement regarding the tastelessness of raw snails is borne out by those who have eaten them. Suitable dressing is required to bring out the flavour of the snail, which is pronounced most delicate by those who have tried them. On the Continent snails that have fed upon vines are considered the best for the table. A recipe for cooking them, the excellence of which is personally vouched for by the author of a little book called *Why Not Eat Insects?* is as follows: Put some water into a saucepan, and when it boils throw in the snails and let them boil for a quarter of an hour; then take them out of their shells, wash them several times, taking great pains to cleanse them thoroughly, place them in clean water, and boil again for a quarter of an hour. Then take them out, rinse and dry them, and place with a little butter in a frying-pan. Fry them

gently until they assume a brown colour, and serve with some piquante sauce. Who will be bold enough to try this? We eat oysters, cockles, and whelks, which are all of them near relations to the despised snail, and no doubt if we could overcome our prejudices we should enjoy a dish of snails as much as one of the other molluscs that we are in the habit of devouring. The rearing of snails for cooking purposes is a thriving industry in many parts of France. Paris calls for a yearly quantity valued at more than half a million francs—no inconsiderable number, considering that the growers usually charge about five francs per hundred. The convents are good customers of the snail-farmer during Lent. The *escargotières*, or snail-gardens, of Ulm are said to provide Austrian religious houses with ten millions of snails per annum. Various methods are employed to bring the creatures to a proper degree of plumpness. In some parts little enclosures are boarded in, to which as many snails as can be collected are brought. They are kept well supplied with a variety of vegetables, and soon gain the desired appearance. In other places wire trelliswork takes the place of the boards, while sometimes the objects of all this care are herded together in casks. If any of our readers are tempted by this description to try how snails taste, they should be careful to starve the creatures for a few days before consigning them to the cooking-pot; for they are very fond of deadly nightshade and other poisonous plants, and a meal of snails which had recently been regaling themselves on such food would probably have bad effects. Gypsies, who are great snail-eaters, are always very careful to starve their snails before devouring them. According to the testimony of a gypsy, the common English snail is just as good to eat as an apple-snail, the only advantage of the latter being that there is more of him.

As might be expected from the way in which he can renew his head, the snail is blessed with very great powers of vitality. A case is recorded of an Egyptian desert-snail which came to life upon being immersed in warm water after it had passed four years glued to a card in the British Museum. Some specimens in the collection of a naturalist revived after they had apparently been dead for fifteen years; and snails frozen for weeks together in solid blocks of ice have recovered on being thawed out. The eggs of this creature are as hard to destroy as himself. They seem perfectly indifferent to freezing, and have been known to prove productive after having been shrivelled up in an oven to the semblance of grains of sand.

ARTHUR SOMERSET.

On some Church Services Fifty Years Ago.

IT will soon be difficult for the present generation, accustomed, even in remote districts, to the modern and seemly manner in which Church of England Services are now conducted—it will soon be difficult, we say, for this generation to realise the lax, colloquial, and occasionally grotesque form in which these same services were literally executed in divers places some fifty or sixty years since.

Not infrequently the service was a sort of dialogue between the parson and the clerk, diversified by interludes from the orchestra in the gallery—an orchestra consisting of flute, fiddle, clarionet, 'cello, and, for aught the congregation knew, of sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer.

The knee-breeches and gaiters, now adapted only to the dignified legs of dignitaries of the Church, were then as indispensable as the 'bands,' which have been since so nearly disbanded from the clerical throats of the modern clergy militant. Those were the days of high-backed, green-baize lined, extensively moth-eaten pews, within whose sacred privacy 'the gentle' took their ease, while worm-eaten 'settles' served the simpler repose of 'the simple.'

A beadle in gown and cane is fast becoming as much an unknown quantity as the number of blows bestowed by him on the heads of errant charity boys. During a long morning service he went his rounds as regularly as the postman of to-day, and rapped at knowledge in lieu of letter-boxes.

In a little old village church to which we were often taken as a child, the aged and sand-blind clergyman left hymns and anthems alike to the discretion of the gallery. At no particular time, but after due consultation and discussion, the number of the

hymn or psalm was chalked on a slate and hung over the front of the gallery for the information of such of the congregation as could see it. The first line of each verse was 'given out,' to the invariable cadence of the first line of the old ditty, 'A frog who would a-wooing go;' but we were used to it, and only strangers were seen to smile.

The clerk was a busy man. Besides taking his share in the dialogue before alluded to, he vacated his desk—the lowest tier of three—immediately before 'singings,' and wended his way up the gallery stairs to join his co-musicians. Old custom had inured us to hearing his 'Amen' resound from just wherever he happened to be when collect or prayer ended; aisle, stairs, or gallery were all alike to him—and to us. Now and again the rector, being, as we have said, sand-blind, made mistakes in the date of the psalms, and was crustily corrected by his clerk. We remember on one occasion his snapping his reverence up particularly short. The little old church was situated in that district in Kent where, at that period, the peasantry considered it 'all affectation of them townsfolk' to pronounce 'the' otherwise than as 'de,' or 'that' than 'dat.' So, when the venerable old man had given out the wrong psalm, his clerk below growled out 'Wrong day o' de mont.' Thus rebuked, the rector carefully and cautiously readjusted his spectacles—as if they were in fault—and re-commenced.

'Dat's de arternoon,' snarled his inexorable subordinate, and at last, the right psalm being found, the service was allowed to proceed.

Once and once only did we see this dictatorial Jack-in-office thoroughly at fault. For though there were many words quite beyond his science to pronounce, as Dandie Dinmont might say, 'distinctly,' still, ignorance was bliss, and he called an alien a lion with all the boldness of one. On this occasion (we heard afterwards he had been flustered by some contention with the gentle 'stringers in the gallery) his still-vexed soul had not heeded, neither knew, 'the psalms proper for this morning's service.' The rector read his verse and the muffled drums of the congregation alone replied; our fogleman, very red in the face and very busy turning the leaves, kept up an inarticulate humming, like a top, and so it went on through the whole of the first psalm. Clear and loud as chanticleer did he crow out his verse of the next one, when, his 'place' at last found, he looked round on us with an eye half-appealing, half-defiant.

During the hot weather, when the church door was left wide open, many and cheering to the children were our visitors. Birds flew in and out, bees and butterflies paid passing visits; even a kitten have we seen, with tail erect, picking her dainty way among the settles until she found her cottage mistress. The eyes of the congregation followed these apparitions stolidly. But not a muscle of their mouths relaxed even when a large Newfoundland dog, having paid a visit to each pew in turn, rising on his hind legs at every closed door, at last announced his discovery of his master by a loud and joyful bark. This occurred during sermon time, and the rector, peering from the heights above, told the clerk to 'turn that dog out,' and sate himself calmly down while his order was executed. The clerk, nothing loath, clanked in his hob-nailed shoes down the aisle, with both hands raised above his head, calling out loudly to the dog, evidently an old acquaintance, 'Go out, old Sailor, go out then!' and the dog, with true canine consciousness of having misdemeaned, lowered his tail and withdrew in confusion. But not a smile was seen; only our eyes followed them to the porch, and on our way home from church we heard the neighbours characterising 'de dog's a-comin' to church' as 'a rum start.'

It was a few years later, when we were staying in the neighbouring town of R—, that certain eccentricities in the services of quite a different style attracted our attention. We heard the new curate discussed, and listened awe-struck to the fact that he had preached the previous Sunday's sermon in lavender kid gloves in addition to his black gown and bands. Some even averred that he wore a ring outside his glove. But his moustache was the head and front of his offending. His gloves and his ring might be, and doubtless were, due to his 'high connections' (he was understood to have married the first cousin of an Earl once removed), but all R—'s inhabitants' hair rose to see a man in the pulpit with hair on his lip; that was 'new fangled,' and not to be endured.

However, he proved so good-humoured and kindly, he was soon liked in the very teeth, so to speak, of his moustache. It is of his clerk rather than of him that we recall certain erratic performances, which could only have occurred fifty years ago. And not so much of the clerk-proper as of the clerk-substitute.

The clerk-proper was a tall, corpulent man, red of eye and husky of voice, addicted to absenting himself from service now

and then by reason of his 'bronchittial organs,' as he termed them, being out of order. His place on these lamentable occasions was supplied by the clerk-substitute. Enthusiastic as are most amateurs, it was the joy and pride of the weazen little barber to array himself in the flowing gown of the portly absentee. A world too wide, as well as too long, it once brought the ambitious little man to signal grief. Restless as an eel, the barber delighted in those extra and supererogatory ministrations which brought him more prominently before the eyes of the congregation. With pursed-up lips and shining spectacles, he had just enjoyed the glory of lighting the two candles in the pulpit, for it was a Sunday evening in early autumn, and before the sermon was ended they would be needed. This necessary office fulfilled, our amateur, no doubt in zeal for the Church, but for reasons known only to himself, next paid a flying visit to the vestry. Meantime the curate was in the pulpit, and the preliminary collect drawing to a close, when the eager barber appeared in full flight down the chancel. Whether in his haste he forgot the two steps or whether his feet became entangled in his robe of office, is not known, but headlong he fell, and prone he lay. Just then the collect came to a conclusion, and the zealot, raising himself on his elbows, responded a loud 'Amen' from the matting. The curate, after leaning over the side of the pulpit to ascertain where the sound came from, had recourse to his white pocket-handkerchief, and the beadle promptly knouted the 'charities' who had dared to grin.

Once when the church was closed for some alterations—the laying-on of gas, we believe—service was held in the old Town Hall of R—. At this time the portly clerk-proper was 'laid up;' the heat and crowded room were objectionable to him, probably. But the barber was equal to the occasion. With the aid of four forms arranged as a square, he built himself in and railed himself off, so as to be seen to the best advantage. Perched in the centre of a bench placed across the square, with a candle—the largest he could procure—placed alight on either hand and at a respectful distance, did he there acquit himself of the responses that fell to his share, with a face suffused with unspeakable satisfaction.

When the church was reopened, we were present, as a great favour, at the first evening service, to see the working of the new lights; and we were gratified in a way we had not expected. The gas was turned on, and the illumination was unimpeachable for the first half-hour or so; then came a flickering, a twitter, a gasp, and darkness such as the land of Egypt must have known, at the

moment when the curate had just read the first words of the collect, commencing, 'Lighten our darkness.'

In the—to us—awful pause that succeeded, the clergyman's voice at last announced 'the Evening Hymn;' and the congregation responded as though they fully realised the 'blessings of the light' of which, that evening, they had so unceremoniously been deprived.

ELLEN DUDLEY.

At the Sign of the Ship.

IF the year 1889 did not do very much else for literature, or at least for the highest literature, it gave us the two most interesting volumes of poetry which are now in the hands of that small remnant to whom poetry appeals. But 1889 took from us Mr. Browning, in the unabated force of his intellect, his courage, his enjoyment of life. On him Time seemed to lay no weakening hand, and his last poems are, in certain ways, more like the poems of his prime than any which he had produced for many years. Few men are missed in the crowded and eager world; rapidly another takes the place, 'each stepping where his comrade stood'—but nobody can ever stand where Mr. Browning stood, and he will be missed while any of those who knew him survive. He was always at the centre of life, in the thick of the throng, his face was known to all, he literally 'went everywhere,' and everywhere is felt the blank and the void. It is not only his friends who are bereaved, it is the whole wide world of his acquaintance—that vast circle to every member of which he was so kind, so genial, in each of whom he seemed to interest himself as much as if all were friends. 'Sir Walter speaks to every man as if he were their blood relation,' said a Scotch peasant seventy years ago, and Mr. Browning was hardly less accessible. He had none of the reserve, the *gêne*, as one may say, the fugitive and cloistered habit of so many poets. He thought nothing alien that was human, and while he was universally known, his alert and gallant bearing were an example and a source of pride to all. We might vary in opinion as to the precise place and merit of his poems; some even of his admirers might be irritated now and then by those plaudits of a few disciples whom he himself treated with so much tact and so much humour. We men are a little race. Nature, in her satire, frequently gives us great persons in pairs—Fielding and Richardson, Bonaparte and Wellington, Dickens and Thackeray, Mr.

Browning and the Laureate. Then we take sides, and quarrel over their respective merits, in place of being glad and grateful. No doubt there was a Sophoclean and an Æschylean party in Athens; perhaps each side was more anxious to run down one dramatist than to extol the other. And now, when our two last great poets give us of their best simultaneously, and that best so typical of either genius, we naturally turn to comparing them again, and, in our hearts, prefer one before the other.

* *

The personal bias of the reader goes for very much in the formation of his opinion. Very few now live who fought the battle for young Mr. Tennyson, who won his spurs so early, and so long ago. But the war for Mr. Browning's eminence was still being fought, though needlessly and superfluously enough, and the partisans are still full of the fire of fight. But the special devotees of the Laureate have on their side the ancient loyalty, the long tradition of poetry from the days of 'that Ionian father of the rest'; in this they are strong, while Mr. Browning's strength lay in his novelty, his absolute originality. His poetry was a new kind of thing, and therefore I, for one, must still feel uncertain of its future fortunes in the dark *forward* and abysm of time. How much of it was peculiar and special to the day; what proportion will be clear and dear to the unborn generations? That is what no man can estimate; we cannot prophesy that a hundred years hence poetry will either have developed itself in the direction where Mr. Browning was the pioneer, or will have returned to the ancient, I think the eternal paths. For poetry may fall asleep in the upheaval of the world, *inter arma silent Musa*, but will not die.

* *

It is probable that verse will continue to be more plain-sailing, more obvious, less acute, less remote from every day's fancies and feelings than Mr. Browning's remarkable *Prologue* to the new volume 'Asolando.' If this was his 'disport in the open air,' his 'amusement at random,' how difficult and rare must be the moods in which come his deepest and most serious ideas!

And now! The lambent flame is—where?
 Lost from the naked world: earth, sky,
 Hill, vale, tree, flower,—Italia's rare
 O'er-running beauty crowds the eye—
 But flame! The Bush is bare.

The aspect of outward beauty altered thus, to the poet, between his first sight of Venice and her distant hills, 'palpably fire-clothed,' and his last. The change is an experience that comes to all, but never, save to this one poet, in emotions to be thus cast, like the bronze of the statue, in purifying flame. And will men live on this level, and be able always to interpret this rare energy of expression? Or will the crowd, of whom we are not, rather fall back on something, not more human, but simpler, and nearer to our humbler faculties, like this older lament for the change in our own sense of nature?

The sun upon the Weirclaw hill
 In Ettrick's vale is sinking sweet;
 The westland wind is hushed and still,
 The lake lies sleeping at my feet—
 Yet not the landscape to mine eye
 Bears those bright hues that once it bore,
 Though evening, with her richest dye,
 Flames o'er the hills of Ettrick's shore,

With listless lock along the plain
 I see Tweed's silver current glide,
 And coldly mark the holy fane
 Of Melrose rise in ruined pride.
 The quiet lake, the balmy air,
 The hill, the stream, the tower, the tree,
 Are they still such as once they were,
 Or is the dreary change in me?

Alas, the warp'd and broken board,
 How can it bear the painter's dye!
 The harp of strained and tuneless chord
 How to the minstrel's skill reply!
 To aching eyes each landscape lowers,
 To feverish pulse each gale blows chill,
 And Araby's or Eden's bowers
 Were barren as this moorland hill.

The author of these lines on the change in us and nature was not easily discouraged; his battle was yet before him. But still less was Mr. Browning discouraged.

No, for the purged ear apprehends
 Earth's import, not the eye late dazed:
 The Voice said 'Call my works thy friends!
 At Nature dost thou shrink amazed?
 God is it who transcends.'

So his Epilogue, his very latest word, speaks from that undaunted heart of his, of

One who never turned his back, but marched breast forward,
 Never doubted clouds would break,
 Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph,
 Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
 Sleep to wake.

The other author just quoted held that to all imaginative men there came moments when, but for religion and the natural shrinking from dissolution, they would lightly throw life away, as a child throws a toy of which it has grown weary. The rule may be true, but Mr. Browning was the exception, and this among all his qualities was the highest, if the least subtle—this indomitable courage, and tireless delight in life. There is a great deal very easy to be said against his optimism; his courage and hope are unimpeachable. Nor is it a little thing that in our age of doubt, the two voices of the two chief poets are clear on the side of hope; though that other voice, so sweet, so dear, so perfect in its measures, perhaps spoke rather of taking

Close-lipped patience for our only friend,
 Sad patience, too near neighbour of despair.

* *

Everybody by this time has compared Lord Tennyson's *Crossing the Bar*, with Mr. Browning's *Epilogue*. Each poet is summed up in each of these latest words, Lord Tennyson's not, we all hope, by any means the last word from him. Both poems are full of hope, but the one is as rugged in utterance as the other's is, beyond himself even, musical with a haunting melody which, once heard, is immortal in the memory. The *Epilogue* is hard to remember, and must rather painfully be got by rote if a man would have it always in his reach. The other sings itself to you—

Sunset and evening star,
 And one clear call for me!
 And may there be no moaning of the bar,
 When I put out to sea,
 But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
 Too full for sound and foam,
 When that which drew from out the boundless deep
 Turns again home.
 Twilight and evening bell,
 And after that the dark!
 And may there be no sadness of farewell
 When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
 The flood may bear me far,
 I hope to see my Pilot face to face
 When I have crossed the bar,

It is the very voice of the full-lipped, windless tide, 'too full for sound or foam;' it has the very colour and air of the dusky shore, when the sea banks are brimmed like a cup. And this poem is so plain that a child cannot stumble at its sense, so classic that it keeps the very pathos of Virgil, and that rich, melancholy, not unhopeful utterance of the sixth *Æneid*. For this is the poet who has broken the golden branch, and is free among the shadows; this is he whose touch revives the blossoms of Theocritus, and makes them,

*Tho' dead in their Trinacrian Enna
 Blossom again on a colder isle.*

* * *

It is not probable, just now, that any one is listening to any poetry but that of those two masters. But, as it chances, there is a new volume well worth reading and noting, not, indeed, for its mastery of the art of verse, though that is not always lacking, but for its revelation of a singularly charming character, for a kind, modest, manly, and honourable interpretation of life. The book is *Sonnets and Poems*, by Lord Rosslyn, who, it appears from the preface, has been prevented by illness from seeing his verses through the press.¹ From the sonnet to Mr. Browning may be quoted the last six lines:—

Oh, Master (not unaided in thy song
 By her who sleepeth now near Arno's wave,
 Worthy to help thee or with thee to write),
 Deign to instruct us weaker ones who long
 To rest their wavering thoughts—not wholly brave—
 Where through the obscure there shines more perfect light.

Out of Lord Rosslyn's sonnets one may, perhaps, especially prefer 'Among My Books,' 'Work and Rest,' 'Brain v. Muscle,' a plea for more muscular work among 'brain-toilers,' as they are called, and more work for the brain among people who labour with the body. But, alas! some of us have no muscles; and some, very scant allowance of brains. The sonnet on Lord Iddesleigh's death is also excellent:—

¹ Remington.

Even we may help to tell, with tender tears,
 Thy life of English home, greatness unsought,
 A ready sympathy for thy fellow-men,
 And those brave words: 'I leave you no arrears.'

In fact, there is here a store of good and serviceable poetic reading, good for everybody, though the author, to judge by his preface, would be the last to claim any especial and very rare skill in the secret things of the rhymers' art.

* * *

'Pop no a poet!' cried an old Scottish lady long ago, 'why, I can tell every card in Belinda's hand.' This argument may, or may not, prove convincingly that Pope was a poet. Mr. Courthope is convinced already, and returns to the charge against Warton, Mr. Matthew Arnold, and many other heretics, in his admirable new biography of the Twitnam recluse.¹ Mr. Courthope's *Life of Pope* is the more excellent because he has resisted the biographer's temptation to paint his hero in the blackest asphalte. Pope's biographers, like the historians of the Roman people, have detested their subjects. Pope's duplicity, his rancour, his cruel attacks on people insignificant and poor, his deplorable tone towards women, have turned biographers into assailants. Mr. Courthope, on the other hand, is perfectly humane, kindly, and tolerant. 'To understand all is to forgive all;' and he appears thoroughly to understand Pope's character and the making of it. People have always pardoned Byron's bitterness because of his unlucky physical mishap. But what was Byron's grievance against nature to Pope's? A 'man of his make,' as he puts it, and with his heart, at once so tender and so fiery and so proud, was born to be made miserable beyond all imagining by the beautiful women who courted him, and then laughed in his face. Educated apart from all that was manly in English life, a child born in a weak, and haughty, and persecuted Church, he was too sorely tempted, and too naturally armed himself with duplicity and mockery, the weapons of the weak. Of such the Laureate says

By those whom God had made full-limbed and tall,
 Scorn was allowed as part of his defect

at King Arthur's court, and we, when all the heat of the turmoil is over, should not be less tolerant than Arthur's knights. One may be even grateful to Mr. Courthope for speaking of Pope's 'romantic narrative' about Addison, and using six syllables in

¹ John Murray.

place of one. But, when it comes to the question of Pope's poetry, that is a different thing. Unless all good writing about verse is to be called 'poetry' (which is a question of terminology), Mr. Courthope has not convinced me that Pope was a poet, except on rare occasions, and, as a rule, 'with a difference.'

* . *

Let us examine a few of his arguments. Let us admit that if Boileau was a poet, Pope was a poet; as far as terminology goes, he has a right to the name. But Mr. Courthope finds fault with Cowper's famous lines, declaring that Pope made

poetry a mere mechanic art,
And every warbler has the tune by heart.

'No criticism,' Mr. Courthope cries, 'in my opinion was ever more superficial and unjust.' And then Mr. Courthope, quite unconsciously, adopts the criticism as his own. He really admits that Fenton and Broome, very average warblers, had 'the tune by heart.' The following words are his:—

'So thoroughly had the assistants mastered the secret of Pope's style, that, as Johnson says, the world has been unable to detect any substantial difference in the work of the different hands.' Could the 'tune' be had by heart better than by Broome and Fenton? Again, 'Pope knew that Fenton and Broome had sufficiently mastered the mechanism of his style to be almost as skilful versifiers as himself,' so, for trade purposes, he tried to keep secret the amount of their contributions to his *Odyssey*. Thus Pope himself agrees with Cowper's verdict, which Mr. Courthope finds 'superficial and unjust.'—*Habemus confitens reum.*

* . *

As to Pope's version of the *Iliad*, Mr. Courthope thinks that this alone would entitle Pope to the praise of 'a great original poet.' But he had a collaborator, surely, in Homer! I said long ago (in a preface to a prose version of the *Odyssey*) that 'this great translation—Pope's—must always live as an English poem.' But then the poetry in it was given by the Greek. Mr. Courthope says that Pope 'has vividly entered into the imaginary situation, not, indeed, in the spirit of Homer, but nevertheless in the spirit of a genuine poet.' Would it not be as true to say, in the spirit of a splendid rhetorician? Mr. Courthope proves his case by extracts of the highest merit, the most brilliant speed and

force, but then they are extracts from Homeric *speeches*. All the future of Greek oratory was present in Homer, and to this, for example to Sarpedon's speech to Glaucus, Pope does perfect, nay, unexampled and unequalled justice, in the manner of his own age. But Homer was so very much more than a rhetorician; Pope, I still venture to think, was not. Mr. Courthope repeats, again and again, that he rendered Homer in the spirit of Statius, that he 'founded his epic style on that of the Latin poets, whose spirit is most opposed to Homer's.' Thus Pope definitely marked his own place, and the limits of his poetic understanding. It is as if one translated the Njal Saga in the manner of Marivaux or of Hayley. To take an example of Mr. Courthope's own, Homer says, 'and the people perished'; Pope says, 'And heaped the camp with mountains of the dead.' Mr. Courthope compares a passage of Pope with a passage of Chapman and one of Mr. Worsley. It is the speech of Agamemnon against Calchas, a piece of oratory again. Here is what Agamemnon begins by saying, 'Prophet of evil, never yet hast thou spoken good to me; ever are evils dear to thy heart to bode: a good word hast thou never said, nor a good deed done, and now thou utterest thy soothsaying among the Danaans, even how that for *this* the archer God sends mischief upon them, because I was not minded to receive the rich atonement instead of Chryses' daughter,' and so forth. Pope has

Angur accursed, denouncing mischief still,
 Prophet of plagues, for ever boding ill;
 Still must that tongue some wounding message bring,
And still thy priestly pride provoke thy king?
For this are Phœbus' oracles explored,
To teach the Greeks to murmur at their lord?
For this with falsehoods is my honour stained;
 Is heaven offended and a priest profaned,
 Because my prize, my beauteous prize I hold,
 And heavenly charms prefer to proffered gold?

It is magnificent rhetoric, but it is not Homer's, and the passages italicised are among the best, though they have no warrant in the original. Naturally, when an English reader compares Pope's version with those by Mr. Worsley and by Chapman, he prefers Pope. The truth is that Pope took the licence of adding his own rhetoric to Homer's, and his own is excellent in its kind. Mr. Worsley and Chapman were more conscientious, but horribly flat. Indeed, Mr. Worsley's Iliad is not a fair example of his powers; his Odyssey is every way

superior. Mr. Courthope charges him with using obsolete English. There are no obsolete words in the passage chosen—indeed, Pope's 'bode' is as archaic as any of them.

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As to poetry in general, Mr. Courthope can conceive of nothing 'more exquisitely poetical' than the lines in the *Rape of the Lock* about the punishments of the sylphs. They are to be

Wedged, whole ages, in a bodkin's eye.

Or, as Ixion fixed, the wretch shall feel
The giddy motion of the whirling mill.
In fumes of burning chocolate shall glow,
And tremble at the sea that froths below.

This is 'exquisitely poetical!' It is a mere parody, a very clever parody, of the pains of Ariel in the *Tempest*. The poetry is Shakespeare's; the parody is Pope's. Indeed, here is the very point where Mr. Courthope and his opponents divide and join issue. We call such a passage as this exquisitely poetical—

And ye Fairies, ye that run
By the triple Hecat's team,
From the presence of the sun,
Following darkness like a dream.

Or we call

Can no one tell me what she sings?

or

But the majestic river floated on,

exquisitely poetical. But, with Hazlitt, we call *The Rape of the Lock* 'the most exquisite specimen of filagree work.' It is like the jewelry of Genoa: diamonds come from other and deeper mines, and pearls are

Brought from the ocean and the green
Shores of the Indian gulf-river.

In brief, and to employ an *argumentum ad hominem* which is too sincere to be discourteous, we find more exquisite poetry in Mr. Courthope's *The Paradise of Birds* than in *The Rape of the Lock*.

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My attention has just been called to a slip of eye or pen in *The Sign of the Ship* for December. I represent Mr. Howells as having compared Mr. Thomas Hardy, as a novelist, to Mr. Thackeray, and declared him more poetical. It was Mr. Trollope, not Mr. Thackeray, that Mr. Howells named in this connection.

I regret the error, and still more that I did not discover it in time to correct it sooner.

* * *

Will the author of a poem signed 'E. C.' in *The Sign of the Ship* for January kindly send name and address?

A. LANG.

The 'Donna.'

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